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(54) **SYSTEM, APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR TEACHING SKIING, SNOWBOARDING, AND THE LIKE**

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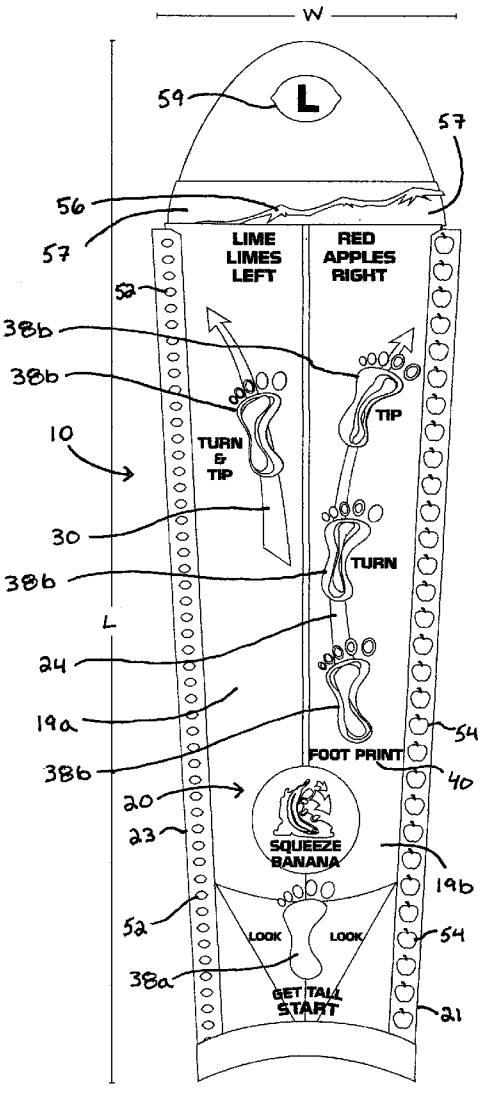
USPC **434/253**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of instructing an individual to ski includes attaching at least a portion of a bottom surface of a first apparatus to at least a portion of a top surface of a left ski. A top surface of the first apparatus may include indicia that instructs the individual how to maneuver the ski when moving downhill. The method may further include attaching at least a portion of a bottom surface of a second apparatus to at least a portion of a top surface of a right ski. A top surface of the second apparatus may include indicia that instructs the individual how to maneuver the ski when moving downhill. The indicia of the second apparatus may be presented in a different layout than the indicia of the first apparatus.



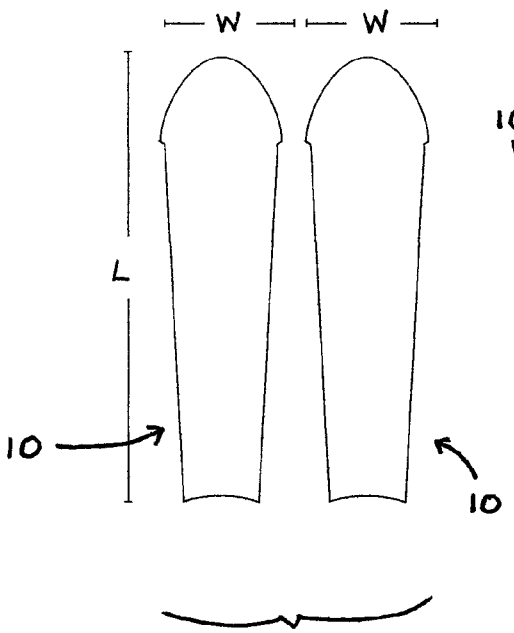


Fig. 1

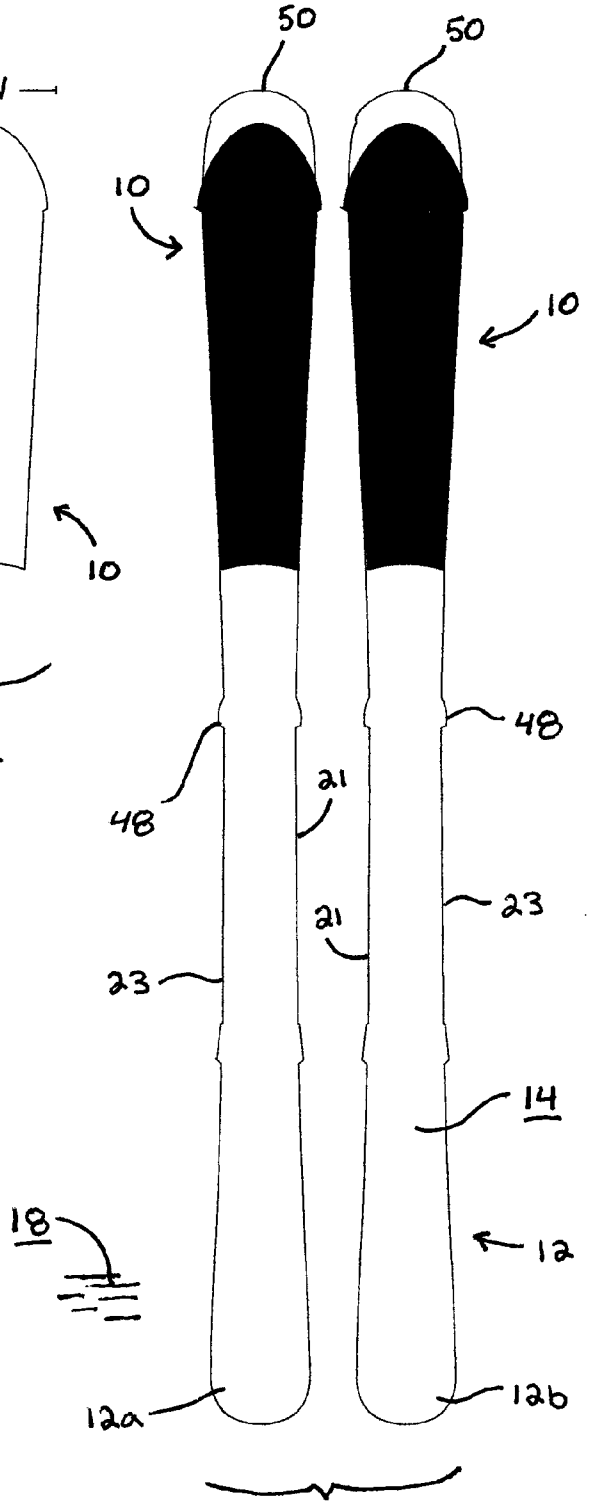


Fig. 2

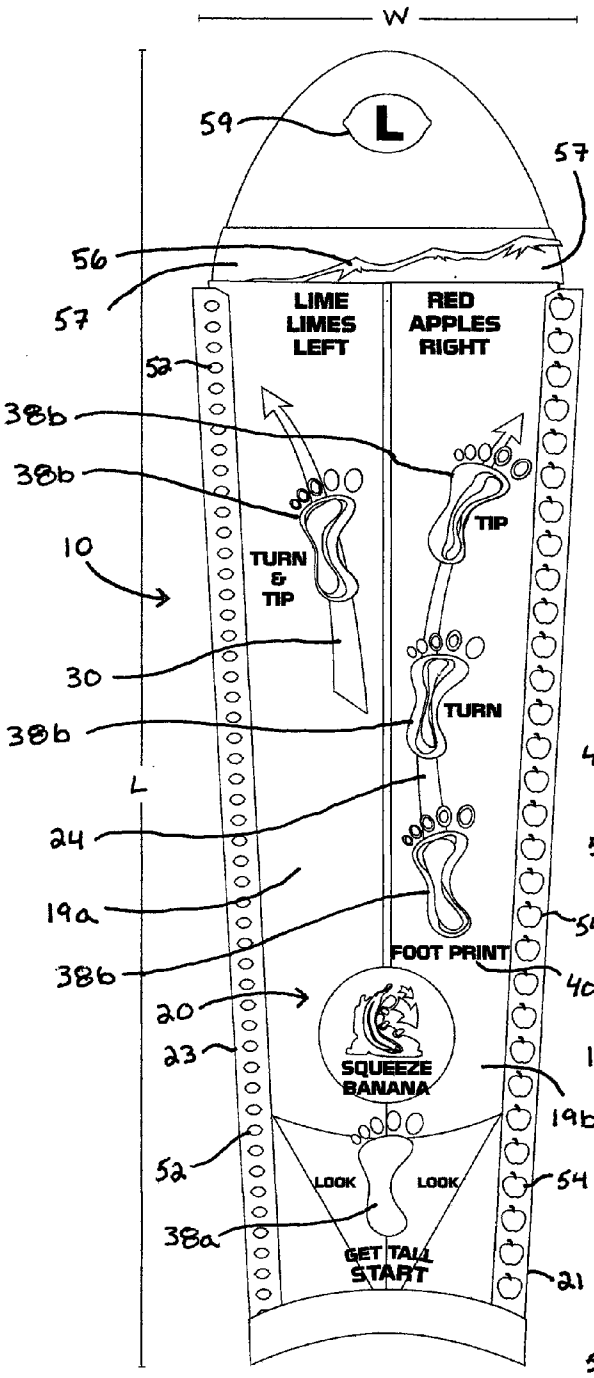

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Fig. 3

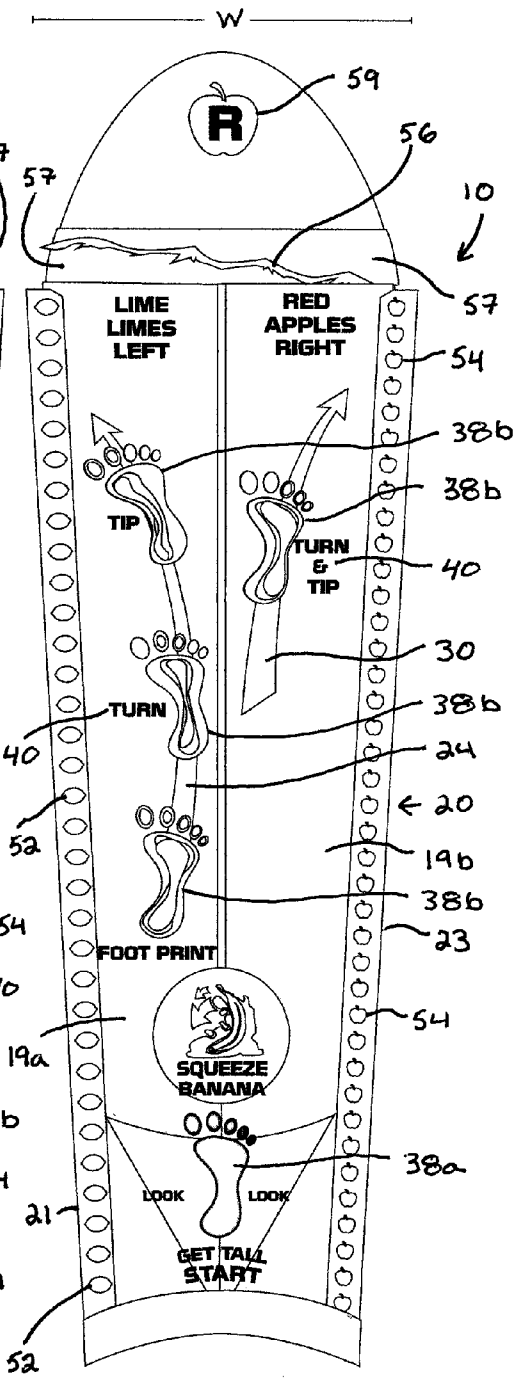
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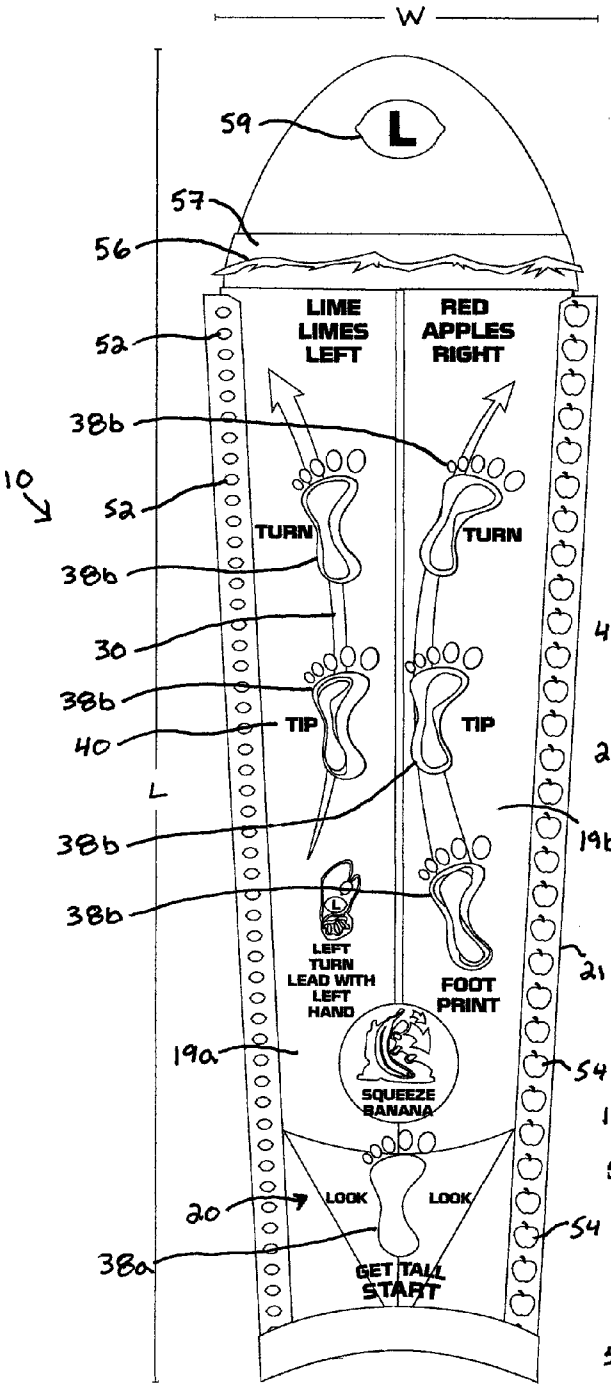
Fig. 4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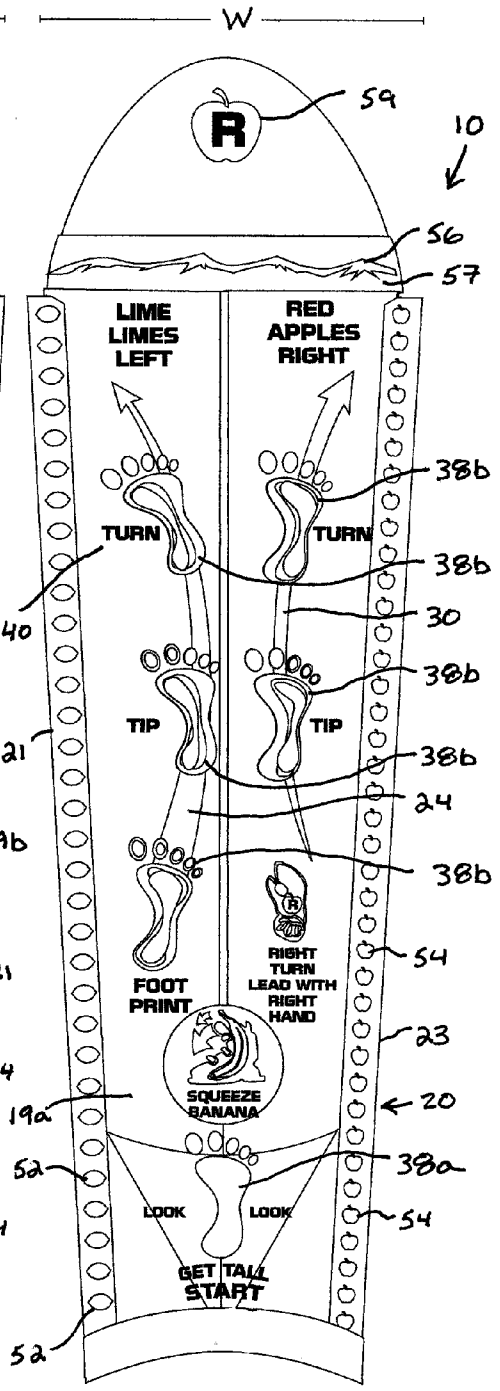
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Fig. 6

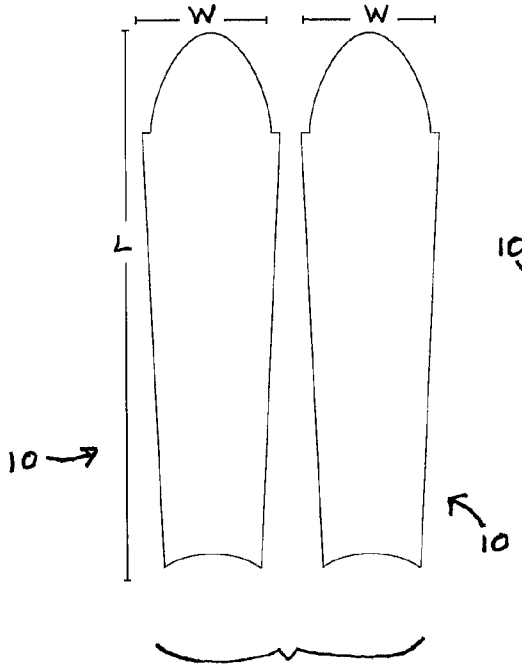
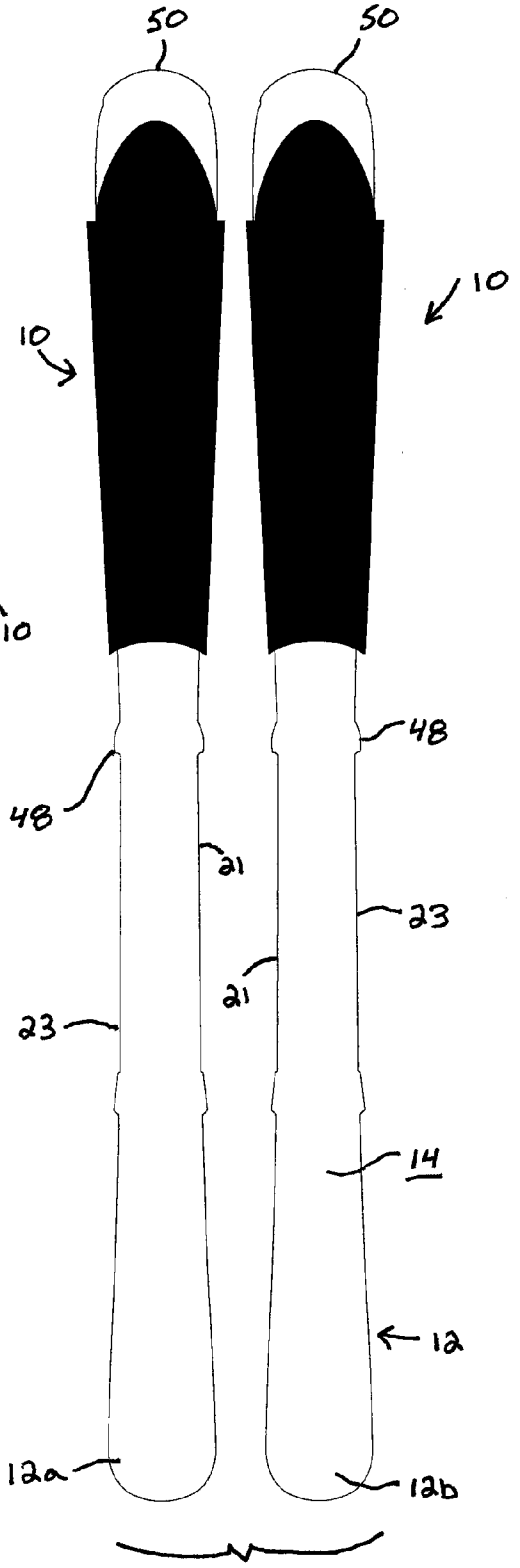


Fig. 7



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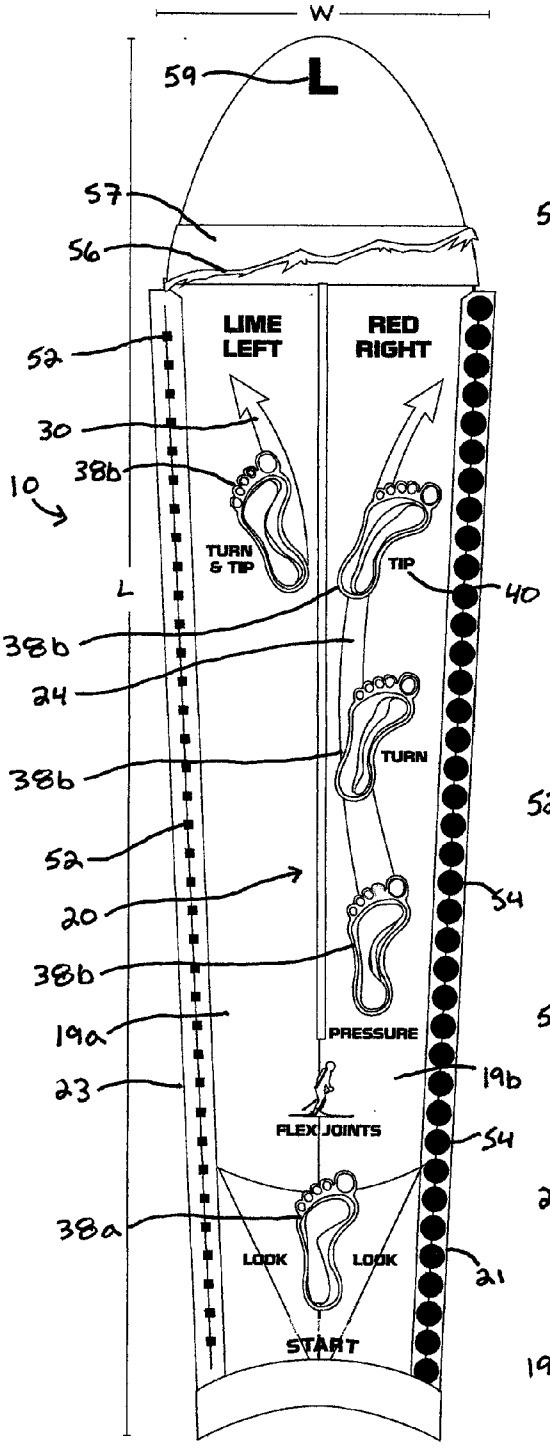
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Fig. 9

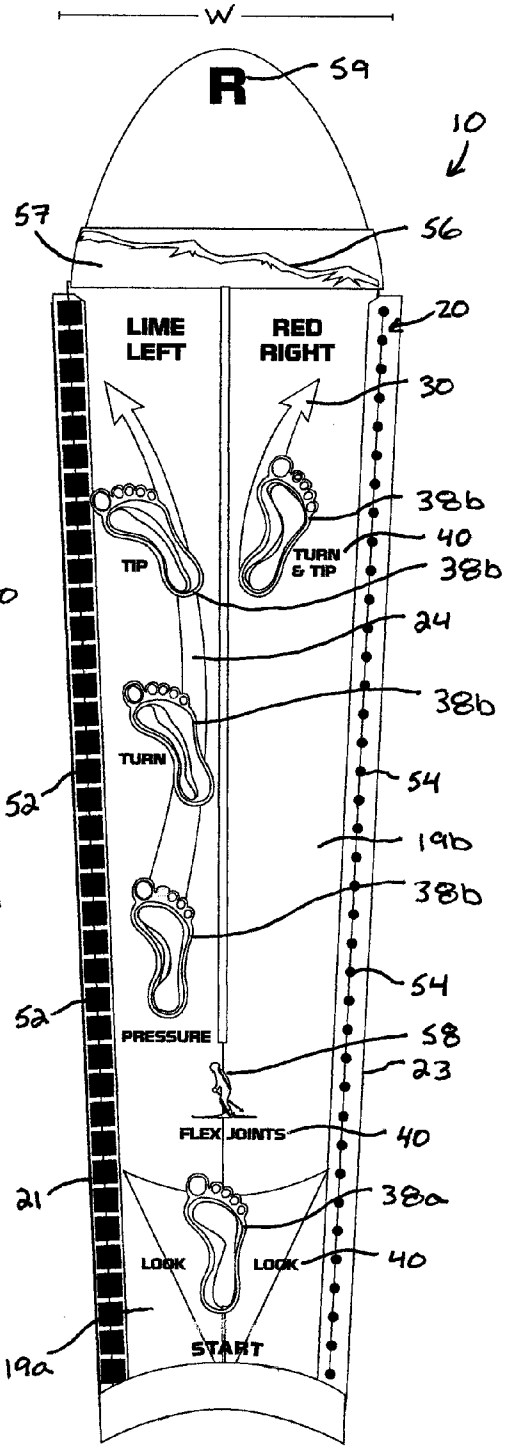
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Fig. 10

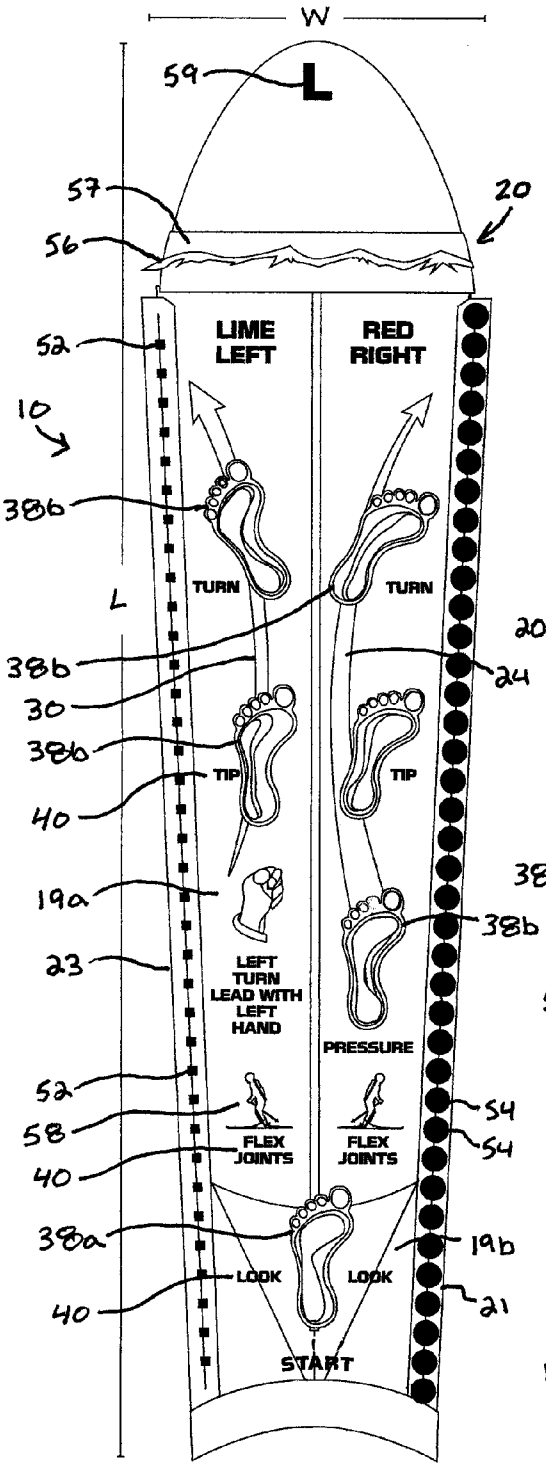
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Fig. 11

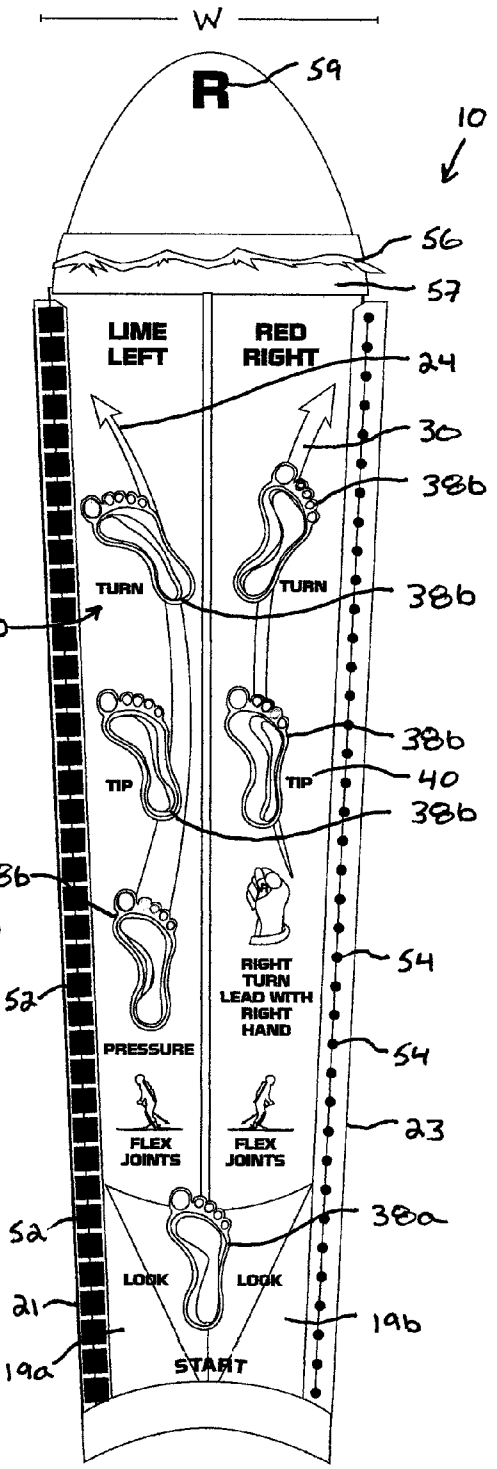
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Fig. 12

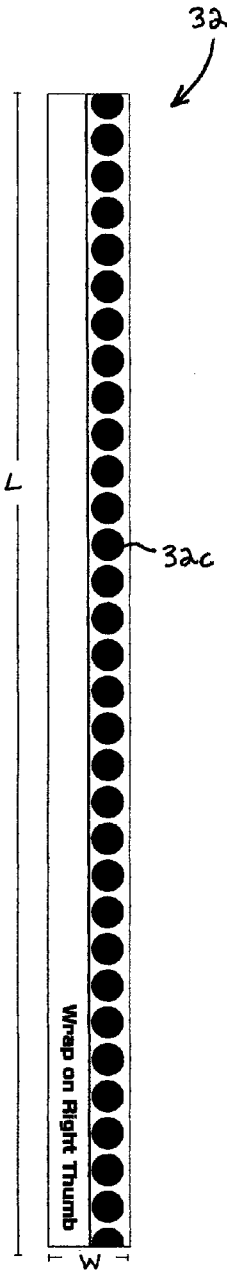

Fig. 13

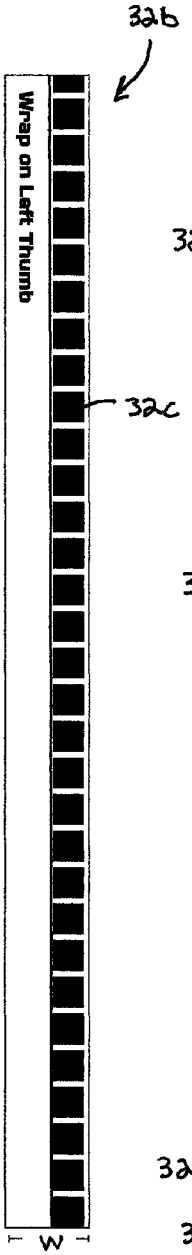

Fig. 14

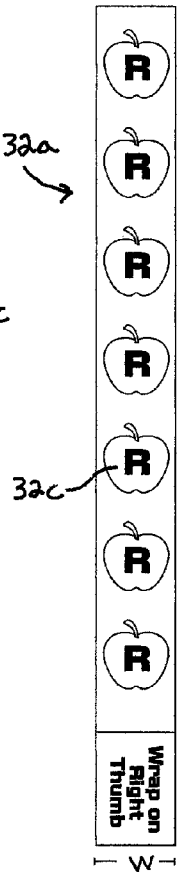

Fig. 15

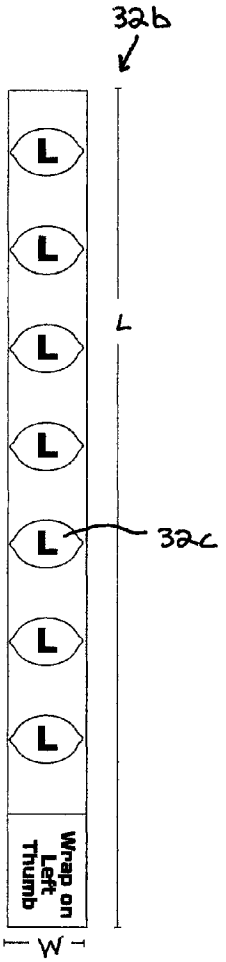

Fig. 16

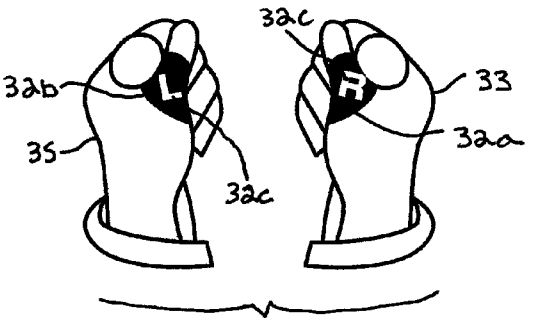

Fig. 17

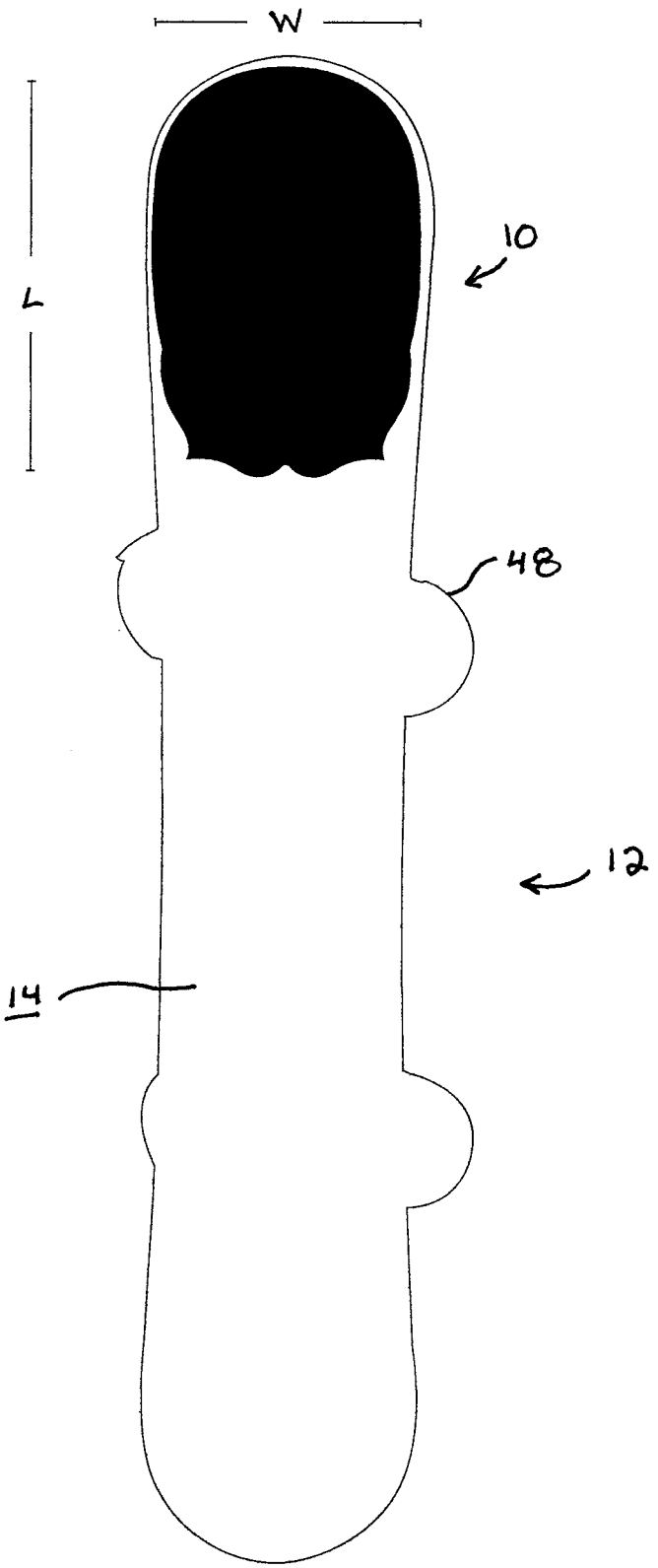

Fig. 18

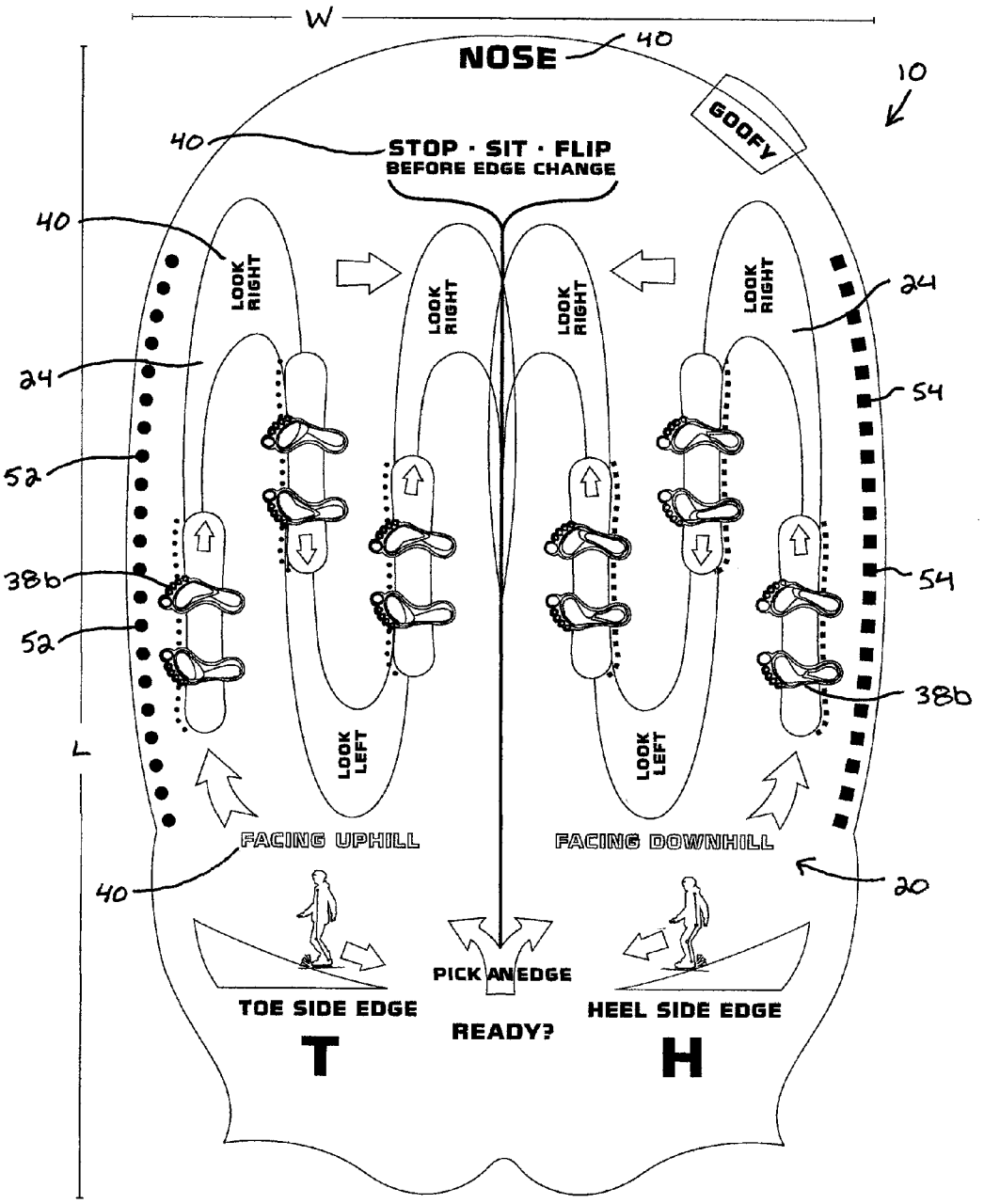
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Fig. 19

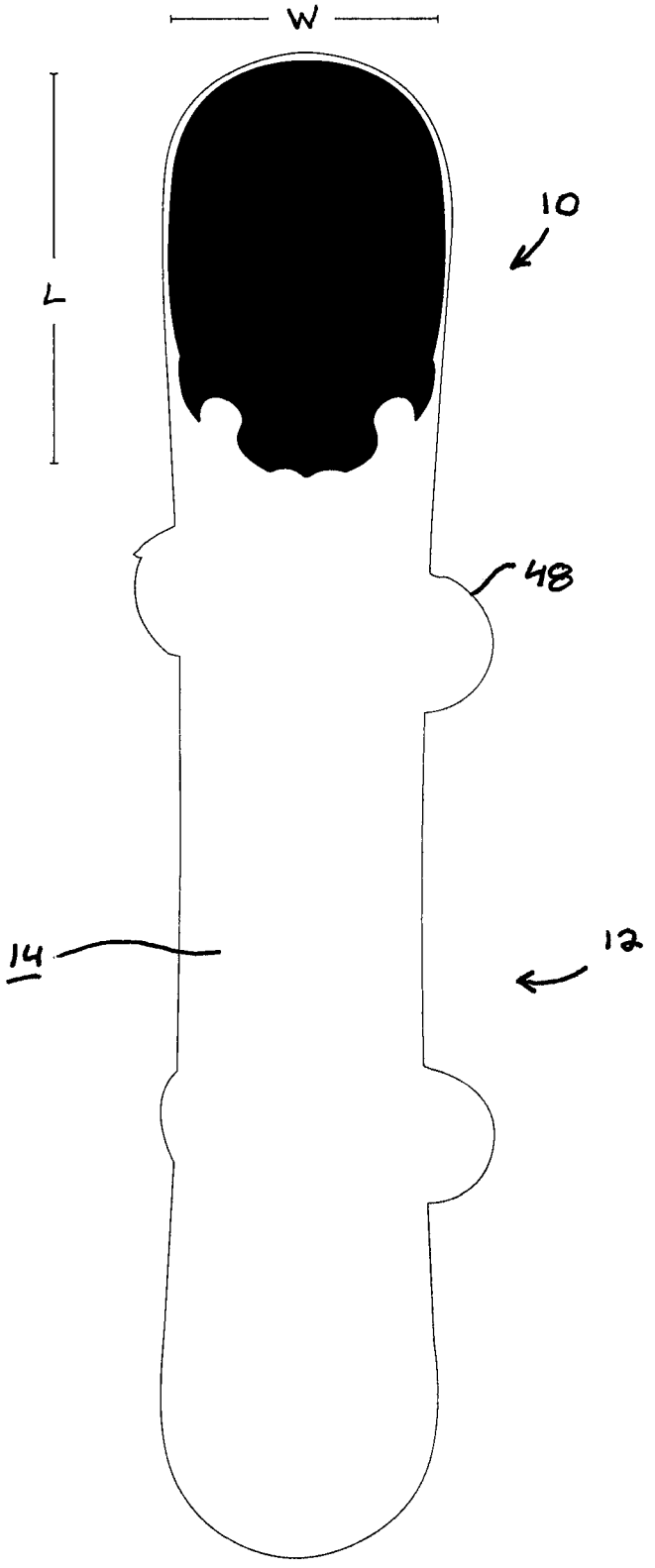

Fig. 20

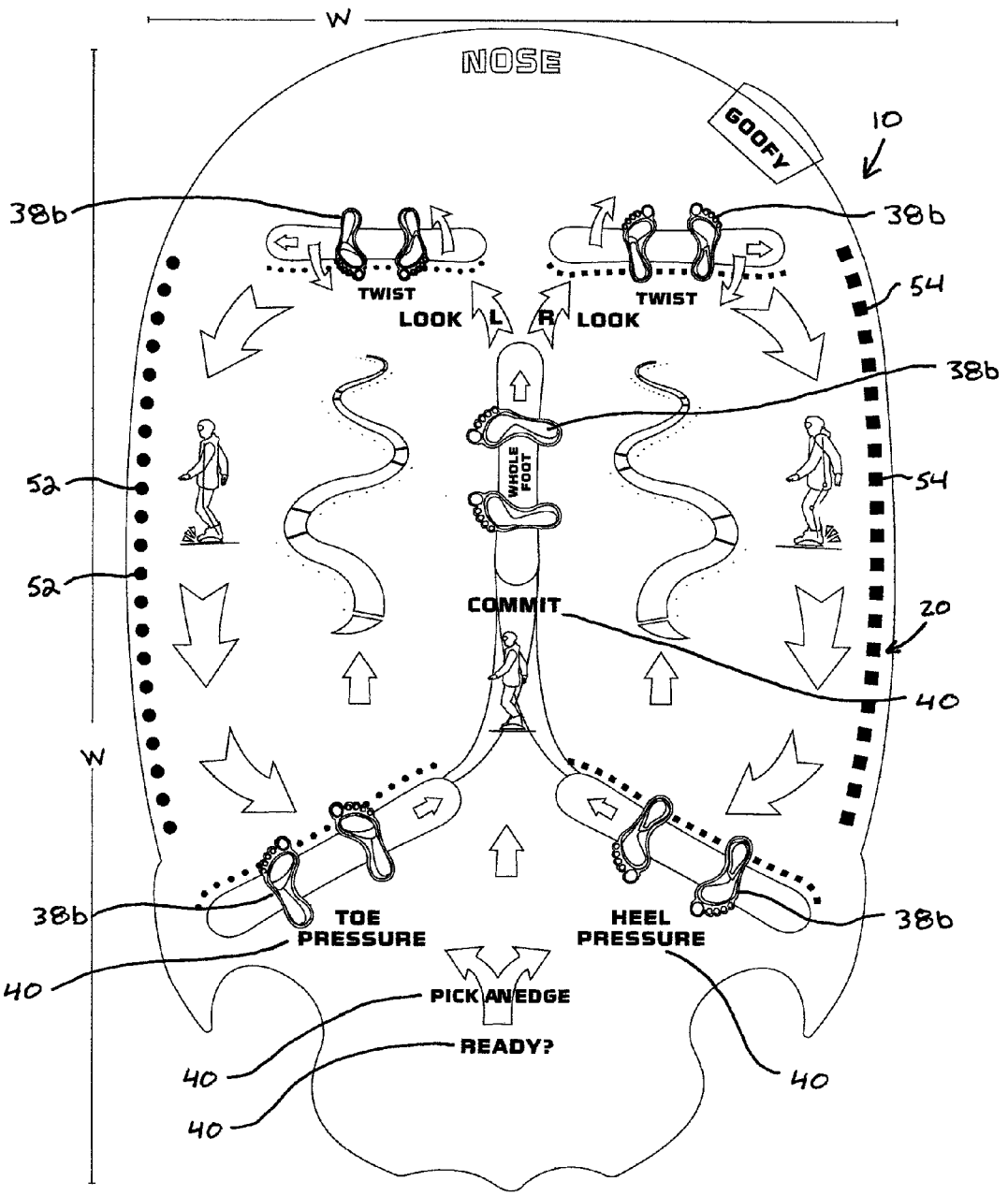
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Fig. 21

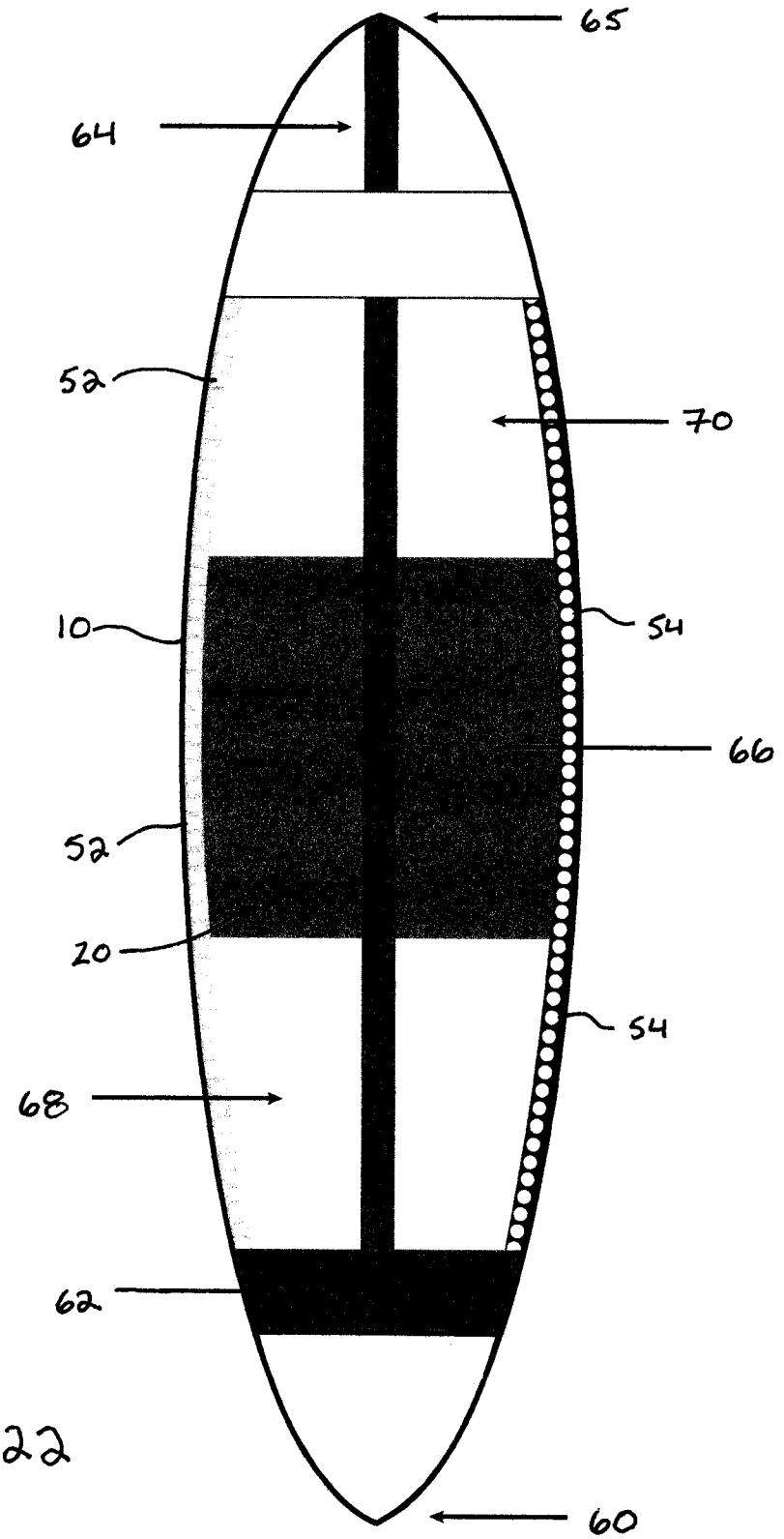

Fig. 22

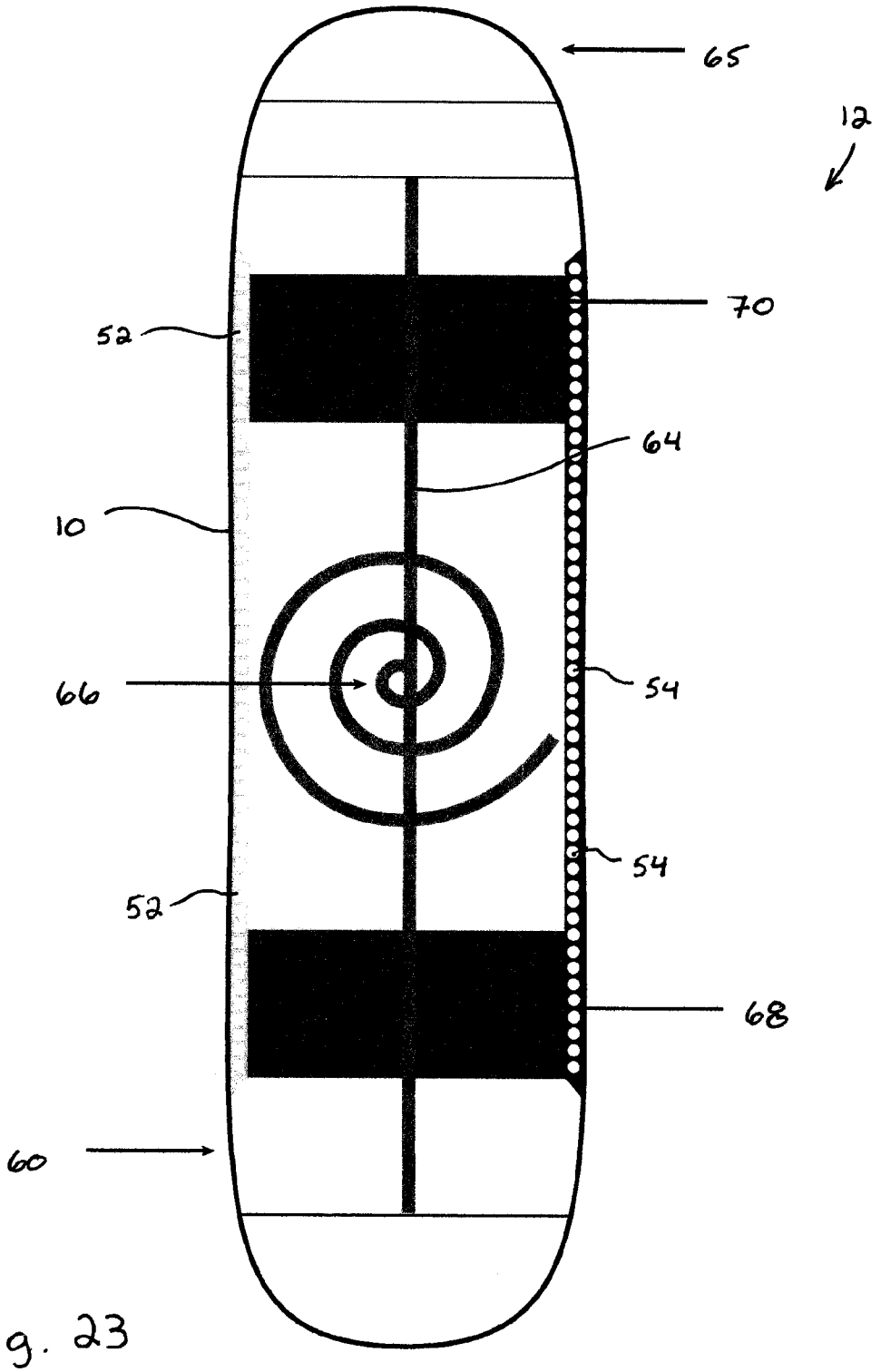

Fig. 23

SYSTEM, APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR TEACHING SKIING, SNOWBOARDING, AND THE LIKE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] The present application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/883,426, filed Sep. 27, 2013 and entitled "Apparatus for and Method of Teaching Skiing, Snowboarding, and the Like," the disclosure of which is herein incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

[0002] The present disclosure is directed generally to a system, apparatus and method for teaching an individual or group of individuals to ski, snowboard and the like.

[0003] Skiing, snowboarding and other similar sports or hobbies require complex skills and movement. Therefore, such sports can be difficult to learn. Many individuals become frustrated and abandon the sports before properly learning the correct techniques. In addition, individuals risk injury if the proper techniques are not followed.

[0004] A relatively simple, affordable and effective system, apparatus and method for teaching skiing, snowboarding and the like has yet to be developed. The present invention overcomes the above-identified disadvantages of the prior art, and accomplishes the above and other objectives.

BRIEF SUMMARY

[0005] The present disclosure is directed generally to a method of instructing an individual to use a pair of Alpine skis, or the like, including attaching at least a portion of a bottom surface of an apparatus to at least a portion of a top surface of at least one or both of the Alpine skis. The top surface of the apparatus may include indicia, which provides guidance to the individual regarding how to use one or both of the Alpine skis. The present disclosure also includes an apparatus and method to teach the individual how to better control the Alpine skis, or the like, and aids in teaching the user how to better turn and/or stop. The present disclosure also includes an apparatus on one or both of the user's hands to aid in teaching.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] The foregoing summary, as well as the following detailed description of the invention, will be better understood when read in conjunction with the appended drawings. For the purpose of illustrating the invention, there are shown in the drawings various illustrative embodiments. It should be understood, however, that the invention is not limited to the precise arrangements and instrumentalities shown. In the drawings:

[0007] FIG. **1** is a top plan view of a pair of apparatus according to an embodiment of the present disclosure, wherein the pair of apparatus are designed to instruct children skiers;

[0008] FIG. **2** is a top plan view of the pair of apparatus shown in FIG. **1** applied to a top surface of a pair of children skis;

[0009] FIG. **3** is an enlarged top plan view of a left apparatus of the pair of apparatus shown in FIG. **1**, wherein the left apparatus includes indicia thereon and is designed to instruct beginner children;

[0010] FIG. **4** is an enlarged top plan view of a right apparatus of the pair of apparatus shown in FIG. **1**, wherein the right apparatus includes indicia thereon and is designed to instruct beginner children;

[0011] FIG. **5** is an enlarged top plan view of a left apparatus of the pair of apparatus shown in FIG. **1**, wherein the left apparatus includes indicia thereon and is designed to instruct advanced children;

[0012] FIG. **6** is an enlarged top plan view of a right apparatus of the pair of apparatus shown in FIG. **1**, wherein the right apparatus includes indicia thereon and is designed to instruct advanced children;

[0013] FIG. **7** is a top plan view of a pair of apparatus according to an embodiment of the present disclosure, wherein the pair of apparatus are designed to instruct adult skiers;

[0014] FIG. **8** is a top plan view of the pair of apparatus shown in FIG. **7** applied to a top surface of a pair of adult skis;

[0015] FIG. **9** is an enlarged top plan view of a left apparatus of the pair of apparatus shown in FIG. **7**, wherein the left apparatus includes indicia thereon and is designed to instruct beginner adults;

[0016] FIG. **10** is an enlarged top plan view of a right apparatus of the pair of apparatus shown in FIG. **7**, wherein the right apparatus includes indicia thereon and is designed to instruct beginner adults;

[0017] FIG. **11** is an enlarged top plan view of a left apparatus of the pair of apparatus shown in FIG. **7**, wherein the left apparatus includes indicia thereon and is designed to instruct advanced adults;

[0018] FIG. **12** is an enlarged top plan view of a right apparatus of the pair of apparatus shown in FIG. **7**, wherein the right apparatus includes indicia thereon and is designed to instruct advanced adults;

[0019] FIG. **13** is a top plan view of an adult right wrap according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0020] FIG. **14** is a top plan view of an adult left wrap according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0021] FIG. **15** is a top plan view of an child right wrap according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0022] FIG. **16** is a top plan view of an child left wrap according to an embodiment of the present disclosure;

[0023] FIG. **17** is a perspective view of a user's hands that include two of the wraps shown in FIGS. **13-16**;

[0024] FIG. **18** is a top plan view of an apparatus according to an embodiment of the present disclosure applied to a top surface of a snowboard, wherein the apparatus is designed to instruct inexperienced snowboarders;

[0025] FIG. **19** is an enlarged top plan view of the apparatus shown in FIG. **18**, wherein the apparatus includes indicia thereon;

[0026] FIG. **20** is a top plan view of an apparatus according to an embodiment of the present disclosure applied to a top surface of a snowboard, wherein the apparatus is designed to instruct more experienced snowboarders;

[0027] FIG. **21** is an enlarged top plan view of the apparatus shown in FIG. **20**, wherein the apparatus includes indicia thereon;

[0028] FIG. **22** is a top perspective view of an apparatus according to an embodiment of the present disclosure applied to a top surface of a surfboard; and

[0029] FIG. **23** is a top perspective view of an apparatus according to an embodiment of the present disclosure applied to a top surface of a skateboard.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0030] Certain terminology is used in the following description for convenience only and is not limiting. The words "bottom," "top," "left," "right," "lower" and "upper" designate directions in the drawings to which reference is made. Unless specifically set forth herein, the terms "a," "an" and "the" are not limited to one element but instead should be read as meaning "at least one." The terminology includes the words noted above, derivatives thereof and words of similar import.

[0031] Referring to the drawings in detail, wherein like numerals indicate like elements throughout, FIGS. **1-23** illustrate a system, apparatus and method for learning, teaching or otherwise providing guidance to an individual during physical activity or certain sporting movements. The term "teaching" is not intended to limit the invention only for use by or with instructors, as one or more skiers or other individuals may use and/or learn from the invention without the assistance of an instructor. The system, apparatus and method include at least one, two or even more apparatus, generally designated **10**, which are temporarily or permanently attachable to or formed into at least a portion of a vehicle **12**. The apparatus **10** may be applied to or formed on or in a top surface **14** of the vehicle **12** at separate and discrete locations. A bottom surface of the vehicle **12**, which generally opposes the top surface **14**, faces and/or at least partially contacts the ground or other support surface **18** (e.g., snow, water, pavement, etc.) when the vehicle **12** moves across the support surface **18**.

[0032] For the sake of brevity and clarity, a majority of the description of the vehicle **12** and method of using same will be made with respect to left and right Alpine skis **12***a*, **12***b*. However, those skilled in the art will understand that identical or modified versions of the apparatus **10** can be employed on or with various types of vehicles **12**. The apparatus **10** is/are most effective when employed with vehicles **12** in which it is desirable to use one or more edges of the vehicle **12** to turn or otherwise maneuver. Such vehicles **12** include snowboards, "Sled Dog" snow skates, snow bikes, Nordic or "cross-country" skis, surfboards, skateboards and the like. In the embodiment for use with Alpine skis **12***a*, **12***b*, two apparatus **10** may be employed, wherein the apparatus **10** for the left ski **12***a* may be generally or exactly a mirror image of the apparatus **10** for the right ski **12***b*.

[0033] In one embodiment, the apparatus **10** is/are designed to simplify the sport of skiing, improve a user's ability to ski, provide readily understandable instruction(s) and/or provide clear insight to a user. The apparatus **10** provide(s) readily understandable instructions to a user while he or she is on top of or attached to the skis **12***a*, **12***b*, and focuses the individual's attention to maximize the individual's effectiveness and/or probability that the individual will properly maneuver the skis **12***a*, **12***b*. In particular, the apparatus **10** help(s) the individual make maneuver's necessary to ski well, such as parallel turns, which is a method for turning which rolls or moves each ski **12***a*, **12***b* onto one edge. When skiing, parallel turns generate less friction and are more efficient both in maintaining speed and minimizing the individual's effort, as compared to other turning methods. Additional maneuvers that the apparatus **10** is/are relevant to and/or can assist with include side slip, hockey stop, hockey slip, pivot slip, guided uphill arc, carved uphill arc, railroad tracks, switch skiing (backwards for freestyle), half pipe, dynamic radius turns (medium and short), variable terrain skiing, wedge turn, short radius, basic parallel, bumps/mogul skiing, pole planting and the like. Thus, each apparatus **10** will give insight and aid the skier with many alpine ski maneuvers that will aid in proficiency in the sport.

[0034] Each apparatus **10** may be formed of generally flexible polymeric material, such as a window or bumper sticker, or a cloth or scrim-backed pressure-sensitive tape coated with polyethylene (e.g., duct tape). Each apparatus **10** could be applied to a vehicle **12** after manufacture of the vehicle **12** is complete. Alternatively, each apparatus **10** may be applied or attached to a vehicle **12** prior to completion of manufacture of the vehicle **12**, such as prior to a top, clear laminate coat is applied to the vehicle **12**. The apparatus **10** may be attached to the vehicle **12** prior to applying a top coat, lamination, foam surface, or grip surface(s) to the vehicle **12**. The apparatus **10** may be stamped dyed infiltrated into top coat of the vehicle. In one embodiment, each apparatus **10** may be formed of a biodegradable material what will wear away due to the cold and/or wet environment after a predetermined period of time (e.g., one day or one week) or number of uses (e.g., five runs down a mountain). However, the apparatus **10** may be formed of any material that permits at least some of the functionality described herein. In one embodiment, the apparatus **10** may not be transferrable to a second ski **12** after being applied to a first ski **12**.

[0035] In one embodiment, each apparatus **10** is generally flat or planar, and may have the size, shape and/or configuration of a relatively thin card. The term "card" is broadly defined herein as any object, regardless of size, shape and/or configuration that may be attached to another object. For example, each apparatus **10** may be in the form of an elongated business card or an index card. However, each apparatus **10** is not limited to a slightly rigid square or rectangular shape, or the size, shape and/or configuration shown herein. Instead, each apparatus **10** may have any size, shape, configuration, color scheme, pattern layout and/or motif that permits the functionality described herein.

[0036] Each apparatus **10** may have a width W and/or a shape generally, if not exactly, equal to a width or a shape of at least a portion of an Alpine ski **12**. For example, for a children's version (see FIGS. **1-6**), each apparatus **10** may have a width W of generally or exactly 3.43 inches, which may be the same or substantially the same as a width of one of a child's ski **12***a*, **12***b* (see FIG. **2**). For an adults' version (see FIGS. **7-12**), each apparatus **10** may have a width W of generally or exactly 4.0 inches, which may be the same or substantially the same as a width of one of an adult's ski **12***a*, **12***b* (see FIG. **12**).

[0037] Each apparatus **10** may have a generally tapered shape (as measured along a longitudinal axis of the apparatus **10**) to match the generally tapered shape of at least a portion of a ski **12**. Each apparatus **10** may be placed on the top surface **14** of a ski **12** between a front binding **48** and a tip **50** thereof. Each apparatus **10** may have a length L that extends generally the entire distance between the front binding **48** and the tip **50** of the respective ski. Alternatively, each apparatus **10** may have a length L that is less than a distance from the

front binding to the tip of the respective ski **12***a*, **12***b*. For example, for a children's version (see FIG. **1-6**), each apparatus **10** may have a length L of generally or exactly 12.0 inches. For an adults' version (see FIG. **7-12**), each apparatus may have a length L of generally or exactly 17.0 inches. It is understood by those skilled in the art that the present disclosure is not limited to the exact sizes, shaped and/or configurations shown and described herein. The size and/or shape of each apparatus **10** will likely vary depending upon the vehicle **12** to which the apparatus **10** is applied.

[0038] A bottom surface of each apparatus **10** may include a fastener, such as adhesive (e.g., high-bond), VELCRO or another hook-and-loop type fastener. The adhesive can be semi-permanent, or removed when user wants to remove the apparatus **10** from the vehicle **12**. The adhesive can be transferable (for coaches/ instructors /parents/trainers, for example, so that they can then customize the lesson to the students' needs). Alternatively or additionally, the material used to form each apparatus **10** may cause the apparatus **10** to stick or attach to the skis **12** when at least a portion of the bottom surface of the apparatus **10** contacts the skis **12**. Each apparatus **10** may be integrally formed with at least a portion of each ski **12**, such as in a top coat or layer thereof, in a factory by the ski manufacturer. The entire bottom surface of each apparatus **10** may be attachable to the top surface **14** of the skis **12**. As a result, the apparatus **10** may extend(s) generally, if not exactly, in the same plane as the top surface **14** of the skis **12**. The apparatus **10** may remain on the skis **12** until it is desired to remove the apparatus **10** from the skis **12**, the apparatus **10** may dissolve or "wear-off" after a certain period of time or number of uses, or the apparatus **10** may be permanently attached to or formed in the skis **12**. In one embodiment, the apparatus **10** may be printed onto and/or into the skis **12**.

[0039] As shown in FIGS. **3-6** and **9-12**, each apparatus **10** includes indicia **20** printed or formed thereon or therein. The indicia **20** may include one or more written instructions, shapes, symbols, icons, colors, photographs, drawings and/or any other form of communication, either static, dynamic or variable (such as a hologram). The indicia **20** may be applied to the apparatus **10** by hand, or the indicia **20** may be placed on the apparatus **10** by a machine (not shown), such as a printer or other graphic-image creator during manufacture of the ski or at some later date. Each apparatus **10** may be placed on the vehicle **12** similar to how wax is applied to a surfboard by a rental shop technician. Alternatively, each apparatus **10** may be formed of a silk screen-type temporary material that may be applied to the vehicle **12** and then wiped off after user becomes proficient in the sport.

[0040] In one embodiment (described in detail below), the indicia **20** may include one or more colors that are designed to garner the individual's attention and/or provide teaching cues to the individual. For example, indicia **20** exhibiting the color red provides guidance for right-hand turns (i.e., "red for right"), while indicia **20** exhibiting the color lime (i.e., green) provides guidance for left-hand turns (i.e., "lime for left"). Red and lime/green are generally clearly visible through the lens of standard ski goggles (none shown). However, other colors may be used. Similarly, the size, shape and/or configuration of the indicia **20** provides guidance on the amount and location of pressure to be applied to each ski **12** and/or the flexion of the user's ankles and other joints when making a turn or other maneuver.

[0041] In particular, each apparatus **10** may have a left portion or half **19***a* and an opposing right portion or half **19***b*. Both the left and rights portions **19***a*, **19***b* may form the background or backdrop for the indicia. In one embodiment, the left portion **19***a* has a lime color, while the right portion **19***b* has a red color. The indicia **20** may have or be formed of one or more colors that are different than the left and right portions **19***a*, **19***b* of the apparatus **10**. At least one or two of the indicia **20** may be in the shape of an arc or an arrow (referred to herein as "large inside component **24**" and/or "small outside component **30**"). The large inside component **24** may be placed at or near an "inside" edge **21** of each ski **12***a*, **12***b* and/or apparatus **10**, and within the left portion **19***a*. The small outside component **30** may be placed at or near the "outside" edge **23** of each ski **12**, **12***b* and/or apparatus **23**, and within the right portion **19***b*.

[0042] In operation, the relative size and position of the components **24**, **30** on the skis **12** may provide a visual indication for the desired amount and location, respectively, of the proper pressure to be applied onto the skis **12** during a turning motion. For example, when desiring to turn at least slightly to the right, the size and location of the large inside component **24** on the left ski **12***a* may instruct the individual to place a relatively large amount of pressure on the inner edge **21** of the left ski **12***a* with his or her left foot. Alternatively, when desiring to turn at least slightly to the left, the size and location of the large inside component **24** of the right ski **12***b* instructs the individual to place a relatively large amount of pressure on the inner edge **21** of the right ski **12***b* with his or her right ski **12***b*. The location of the large inside component **24** on the inside edge of the downhill ski (when turning) emphasizes the importance of placing most of the individual's weight on the downhill ski, which is counterintuitive to most novice skiers.

[0043] The small outside component **30** may provide additional guidance to the individual, and may be more appropriate for intermediate and/or advanced skiers. For example, during a right turn, the size and location of the small outside component **30** on the right ski **12***b* may instruct the individual to place a lesser amount of pressure (as compared to that applied on the inside edge **21** of the left ski **12***a*) on the outside edge **23** of the right ski **12***b* with his or her right foot. Similarly, during a left turn, the size and location of the small outside component **30** on the left ski **12***a* instructs the individual to place a lesser amount of pressure (as compared to that applied on the inside edge **21** of the right ski **12***b*) on the outside edge **23** of the left ski **12***a* with his or her left foot.

[0044] Thus, the components **24**, **30** relate to where the individual should apply pressure onto each ski **12**, and how much pressure the individual should apply to each ski **12** when making a desired move or turn. In contrast to prior art ski teaching methods, which focus on each ski **12***a*, **12***b* as a whole, the present disclosure focuses on the inside and outside edges **21**, **23** of each ski **12***a*, **12***b* to facilitate quicker and easier turning. The arcuate shape of each component **24** **30** may remind the individual of the desired shape to be made in the snow when steering or turning the skis **12**. The location of the apparatus **10** on the skis **12** reminds the individual to maintain a flex in his or her legs by at least slightly pressing both ankles toward the apparatuses **10** on top of the skis **12**.

[0045] In addition, the thickness or width of each component **24**, **30** may vary or gradually decrease from an end toward the front binding **48** to an end toward the tip **50** of the skis **12**. The thickness may indicate to the user the amount of

each ski **12** that should be contacting the snow as the turn is made. The thickness of each component **24**, **30** is less toward an end of a turn because each ski **12** progresses more toward or on its edges as a turn progresses. Each component **24**, **30** may be relatively thick when the skis **12** are flat on the snow and becomes skinny when the skis **12** are on an edge **21**, **23**.

[0046] In one embodiment, proximate to the tip **50** of each the ski **12** and forward of each component **24**, **30**, each apparatus **10** may include an icon **56** (referred to herein as "mountain scape icon **56**") to promote or instruct a proper orientation of each ski **12**. In particular, on the children beginner version (FIGS. **3** and **4**) and the adult's beginner version (FIGS. **9** and **10**), the mountain scape icon **56** may be angled to slope upwardly from the outer edge **23** toward the inner edge **21**.

[0047] Such a slope of the mountain scape icon **56** encourages or reminds the user to turn the respective ski **12***a*, **12***b* at least slightly inwardly to promote a "wedge" shape of the skis **12**. Positioning the skis **12** this way allows the beginner to control speed by using opposing ski edges. The maneuvers are wedge stop, wedge turn and wedge Christie, which is a stepping to all advanced ski moves that can be achieved with the advanced version (e.g., see FIGS. **11** and **12**) of the apparatus of the present disclosure.

[0048] On the children advanced version (FIGS. **5** and **6**) and the adults' advanced version (FIGS. **11** and **12**), the mountain scape icon **56** may extend across the apparatus **10** in a generally level or flat manner. Such a positioning of the mountain scape icon **56** encourages or reminds the advanced user to keep the skis **12***a*, **12***b* at least generally parallel to promote "parallel skiing" form. An example of a color scheme for this aspect of the apparatus **10** includes each mountain scape icon **56** being shown in white and placed on top of a blue background **57**, for example.

[0049] As shown in FIGS. **3-6** and **9-12**, each apparatus **10** may include a foot designation icon **59** proximate the tip of each ski **50**. In the children version, the foot designation icon **59** may be in the form of a green lime with the letter "L" placed therein on the apparatus **10** for the left ski **12***a*, and the foot designation icon **59** may be in the form of a red apple with the letter "R" placed therein on the apparatus **10** for the right ski **12***b*. For the adults' version, the foot designation icon **59** for each apparatus may simply be an "L" and an "R" for the left and right skis **12***a*, **12***b*, respectively.

[0050] In one embodiment, all of the individual indicia **20** of the apparatus **10** may be placed on the skis **12** simultaneously. Alternatively, in one embodiment, different individual indicia **20** can be applied onto the skis **12** in a progressive manner, such as when the individual's abilities improve. For example, for level I beginner skiers, in one embodiment, only the large inside components **24** may be attached to the skis **12**, without the small outside components **30**. Thus, an entry level version of the present disclosure may have indicia **20** as compared to a more advanced version. As the individual advances to a level II intermediate and eventually a level III expert skier, the small outside component **30** may be attached to the skis **12**. The addition of the small outside component **30** provides additional guidance to the individual, which increases the complexity of the instruction.

[0051] At least two versions (a version for shorter skis and a version for longer skis) of the apparatus **10** may be available. In one embodiment of a system according to the present disclosure, different versions of the apparatus **10** or even can be applied onto the skis **12** in a progressive manner, such as when the individual's abilities improve. For example, as an individual grows or becomes more comfortable with the sport, the children beginner version of the apparatus **10** (see FIGS. **3** and **4**) may be replaced by the children advanced version of the apparatus **10** (see FIGS. **5** and **6**). Similar progression can be accomplished with the adults' version of the apparatus **10** (see FIGS. **9-12**).

[0052] To maintain safe skiing conditions, it is desirable that the user studies or views the apparatus **10** on the skis **12** when either at a full and complete stop on the mountain or on a chair lift, for example, or when moving slowly on a gradual incline in which other skiers are not nearby. A user should not look down at this product while moving at fast speeds downhill. To this end, each apparatus **10** may be formed completely or at least partially of material that displays the indicia **20** when viewing the apparatus **10** from a particular position or perspective. For example, each apparatus **10** may be formed partially or even completely of a hologram material that permits the indicia **20** to be viewed and/or read when being viewed at one angle or perspective (such as when holding the ski **12** upright in front of the user) and prevents or at limits the ability of the user to view and/or read the indicia **20** when being viewed at a second angle or perspective (such as when the user is standing upright and skiing). Successful skiing will be accomplished by the user remembering the movement or control taught by the apparatus **10** while the user is skiing. The apparatus **10** will provide the skier with insight regarding the movements the body must do to accomplish effective use of the skis **12** on the snow. Stated differently, the apparatus **10** provide a more beginner skier insight into how professional or expert skiers understand how to best maneuver skis to accomplish certain motions or movements.

[0053] Further, one or a series of drawings, photographs or other images may be located on the top surface **14** of the skis **12** to show additional details about the preferred relative positioning of each foot during a turning motion. In particular, above, below or proximate to the components **24**, **30**, at least one image of a foot or foot imprint **38***a* may show each foot in a straight and balanced position. For example, the foot imprint **38***a* may be an image of a pressure diagram of the bottom of a foot that displays pressure points with color gradients. In the straight and balanced position, the pressure points may be located at the heel, the ball and the big toe of each foot. The straight and balanced imprints **38***a* remind the individual of the proper positioning of the feet when riding the skis **12** straight ahead. More specifically, the straight and balanced imprints **38***a* remind the individual to flatten the skis **12** between turns. In one embodiment, the foot imprint **38***a* may be displayed in blue.

[0054] Other varying images **38***b* of foot imprints may be placed on, near or superimposed over the components **24**, **30** at various angle/orientations and display an appropriate pressure intensity to perform that particular stage of a turn. As shown in FIGS. **3-6** and **9-12**, the other varying images **38***b* may be static images placed in progression along the length of the ski **12** and/or apparatus **10**. In an embodiment where the components **24**, **30** are of generally or exactly the same size and shape, the other varying images **38***b* may be the only indication to the user of how to distribute his/her weight on each foot when performing a maneuver. The appropriate amount and location of pressure of the user's body weight is important when learning most, if not all, board sports. Otherwise, the skis **12**, for example, will be out of control when on a slope. Most skiers do not properly apply pressure to the

vehicle **12**, regardless of the surface **18** (e.g., snow, water, cement, etc.) that the vehicle **12** is traveling.

[0055] In all of the images **38***a*, **38***b*, various parts of each foot may highlighted to emphasize that at least some of the user's weight should be placed on the highlighted parts of the foot during skiing maneuvers. The foot imprints **38***a*, **38***b* provide additional guidance to the individual by essentially showing a step-by-step process of completing a turn or another maneuver. Beginner versions of the apparatus **10** may have fewer varying images **38***b* (for example, three), while advanced versions of the apparatus **10** may have more varying images **38***b* (for example, three or four).

[0056] In one embodiment, text **40** may be placed or displayed near or on one or more of the foot imprints **38***a*, **38***b* to provide additional guidance to the user. For example, in the children beginner version (see FIGS. **3** and **4**), when turning toward the right, the text "FOOT PRINT," "TURN" and "TIP" may be displayed sequentially along the apparatus **10** next to individual foot imprints **38***b*. This encourages the user to place his/her right foot flat on the ground at the start of the turn (which, in turn, places the ski **12** flat on the ground), then turn or angle his/her foot, and then tip his/her foot toward the end of the turn. In contrast, in the children advanced version (see FIGS. **5** and **6**), when turning toward the right, the user is encouraged to place his/her right foot flat on the ground at the start of the turn, then tip his/her foot, and then turn or angle his/her foot toward the end of the turn. Thus, the present disclosure provides different teachings for different skill levels.

[0057] As shown in FIGS. **9-12**, text **40** including the word "LOOK" may be placed or displayed on each side of each of the straight and balanced imprints **38***a*. This guides the user to look toward the direction of the desired turn. When the user looks toward the direction of the desired turn, momentum of the body will follow, which helps to facilitate the turn. In addition, indicia **20** that includes a flex joint icon **58** may be placed between the straight and balanced imprint **38***a* and the first varying image **38***b* with the text "FLEX JOINTS." The adults' beginning version of the apparatus **10** may include only a single flex joint icon **58** positioned at an approximate lateral midpoint of the apparatus **10** (see FIGS. **9** and **10**). In contrast, the adults' advanced version of the apparatus **10** may include a flex joint icon **58** in each of the left and right portion **19***a*, **19***b* of the apparatus **10** (see FIGS. **11** and **12**).

[0058] As shown in FIGS. **3-6** and **9-12**, additional indicia **20** may include a series of green limes or squares **52** along the left side of each apparatus **10** and a series of red apples or circles **54** along the right side of each apparatus. The size and/or color intensity of each of the green limes/squares **52** and the red apples/circles **54** can vary with turn direction and/or the desired amount of pressure to be applied during a maneuver. For example, as shown when comparing FIGS. **3** and **4**, the green limes **52** are larger on the right apparatus **10** (see FIG. **4**) than on the left apparatus **10** (see FIG. **3**) because additional pressure should be put on the inside edge **21** of the right ski **12***b* when making a turn or maneuver to the left. The size and shape of the limes/squares **52** and the apples/circles **54** shown herein is for illustration only, as the limes/squares **52** and the apples/circles **54** can be in any of a variety of shapes and/or sizes. However, in one embodiment, it is preferred that the limes/squares **52** and apples/circles **54** located on the inner edge **21** of each apparatus **10** are larger compared to the limes/squares **52** and apples/circles **54** located on the outer edge **23** of each apparatus **10**, because more pressure is needed on the inner edge **21** of the ski **12** (e.g., downhill ski) that is opposite to the turning direction.

[0059] As shown in FIGS. **13-17**, additional complexity and/or guidance can be added by placing certain objects or straps **32***a*, **32***b* on the individual's hands. The objects **32***a*, **32***b* connect or otherwise figuratively pull the individual's upper body into unison or alignment with the individual's lower body that is guided by the apparatus **10**. The combination of the objects **32***a*, **32***b* and the apparatus **10** provide the individual with better balance on the skis **12**. It has been observed that proper technique for beginning a skiing turn is to lead with the individual's inside hand. In other words, it is proper technique to lead with the individual's right hand if the individual desires to make a right turn. By moving the inside (e.g., uphill) hand forward when turning, the skier's mass falls into the gravity line, which most skiers fear. The objects **32***a*, **32***b* aid the user in their timing of the turn relative to the different stages of the turn, which are initiation/middle/completion and transition of the turn. Most skiers use their ski poles in the wrong phase of a turn. The objects **32***a*, **32***b* will also help the user with their balance.

[0060] In particular, an object **32***a* exhibiting the color red and containing one or more icons **32***c* may be placed on or near the individual's thumb on his or her right hand **33**. Similarly, an object **32***b* exhibiting the color green and containing one or more icons **32***c* may be placed on or near the individual's thumb on his or her left hand **35**. The objects **32***a*, **32***b* may be removably attached to the individual's gloves or mittens with adhesive, hook-and-loop type fasteners, or any other type of fastener. Each object **32***a*, **32***b* may have a generally rectangular shape, and may have a width W of approximately 1-2 inches and a length L of approximately 3 inches. However, the size, shape and/or configuration of each symbol **32***a*, **32***b* is not so limited, and may vary depending upon whether the objects **32***a*, **32***b* are designed for an adult (FIGS. **13-14**) or a child (FIGS. **15-16**). The objects **32***a*, **32***b* and/or the icons **32***c* may help the individual become a more advanced parallel skier by providing a visual indication of the desired direction of turning. For example, if the individual desires to turn right, the individual points their right thumb having the red object **32***a* toward the right and puts weight or pressure at or near the large inner component **24**. As a result, the individual's weight and/or balance will be improved for making a right turn or move.

[0061] The above-described components **24**, **30**, images **38***a*, **38***b*, icons **59** and the like may be formed on or included in one apparatus **10** removably attached to one of two separate sheets. Each sheet may be applied to one of the two skis **12***a*, **12***b* at a convenient location, such as in a ski shop (not shown) or at the base of a chair lift (not shown). As a result, the components **24**, **30**, images **38***a*, **38***b*, icons **59** and the like can be pre-arranged and applied to the skis **12***a*, **12***b* in a relatively short period of time. Each sheet may be placed on the portion of the skis **12***a*, **12***b* that is in front of or distal to the front binding **48** of the respective ski **12***a*, **12***b*. Each sheet may come in two or more sizes, namely one size and indicia **20** arrangement for adults and another for children. Also, as described above, each sheet may come in two or more versions (e.g., beginner and intermediate). Each sheet may have a legend key to acclimate the individual with the various indicia **20**. It is preferred that no part of the apparatus **10** covers the binding or the rear part of the skis **12**. In an alternative embodiment, two or more apparatuses **10** may be removably attached to a single sheet **45**.

[0062] A relatively small, water-proof instruction card and/or a website address (e.g., URL) may be included in any packet or kit that is provided with the apparatus **10**. The instruction card may provide guidance for where and how to apply the apparatus **10** onto the vehicle **12**. In addition, the instruction card may provide guidance regarding to implementation of the invention while skiing. For example, the instruction card may outline or describe in detail the relationship between the individual's body mechanics, the apparatus **10** and the vehicle **12**. A separate booklet may also be provided to the individual with additional information to improve technique, such as information on the four skiing movement patterns of flexion, turning, pressure and tipping. A scraper may be included in any packet or kit to assist the individual or another person in removing the apparatus **10** from the skis **12**, as well as a small cloth to remove moisture from the top surface **14** of the skis **12** prior to applying the apparatuses **10** to the skis **12**. The scraper may also be used to remove snow and ice prior application of the apparatus **10** to the vehicle **12**. In one embodiment, it is preferred that the apparatus **10** be applied to the vehicle in a dry environment at room temperature. The cloth may also aid in removing moisture from the top **14** of the vehicle **12** prior to applying the apparatus **10**.

[0063] An audio version of each apparatus **10** may also be provided for the auditory type learner, which would verbally explain information on skiing movements, such as flexion, balance, turning, pressure, unweighting the edges, tip lead and tipping on to correct edges and pole use. In addition, an audio app and a visual app of the apparatus **10** may be provided for smartphone and computer use, along with website, CD and/or DVD.

[0064] The disclosure of the present application is equally applicable to all sports that involve a board and/or that require or benefit from foot contact with a board. The present disclosure assists in the user's cognitive understanding of what the particular board is designed to do relative to the user's body. The apparatus **10** and/or indicia **20** provides a visual language, with icons, images, profiles, lines, shapes, colors, arrows, arches track lines, movement text and/or text that identified the anatomy of the top of each board relative to places on the top of the board where physical contact or movements is to occur. The apparatus **10** and/or indicia **20** provide more fun and less frustration when learning the sport, because the more comfortable a user is with the vehicle **12** and the more the user understands how to control the vehicle **12**, the more fun the user will experience. Understanding how to correctly operate these vehicle **12** from the beginning may possibly keep the user in more control of their equipment and, therefore, less prone to accidents or injury.

[0065] The present disclosure allows the user to develop a better understanding by using their brain in relationship to what their body is to do when in movement on the board. Most board sports rely heavily on sensory perception (e.g., when you turn the ski correctly you will feel it). This can take years of practice for some user. The disconnect between the brain and what the body is to in relationship to the board/boards frustrates many users. Users quite the sport at alarming high rates. By providing intellectual interpretation on the surface of the board, at the period of time the user is participating in the sport, the success rate for users should improve. The present disclosure also encourages a transfer of learning from one board sport to other board sports. Each apparatus **10** may guide the user to correctly operate the vehicle **12** by understanding what proficient movements should be performed and a general location on the vehicle **12** as to where the pressure should be applied and/or the motion should occur. In one embodiment, the layout of the indicia **20** on the apparatus **10** is designed to be read from the bottom (proximal) to the top (distal) of the board with respect to the user.

[0066] One example of an alternative sport in which the apparatus **10** can be beneficial is snowboarding. FIGS. **18-21** show versions of the apparatus **10** applied to a top surface **14** of a snowboard, wherein features similar to those shown in the ski version are shown with like reference numerals throughout. Description of certain like features may be omitted herein for convenience and brevity. A width W of both the inexperienced and experienced version of the apparatus **10** is approximately or exactly 11.2 inches, and a length L of both the inexperienced and experienced version of the apparatus **10** is approximately or exactly 17 inches.

[0067] Snowboarding skills are at least slightly different than those used for skiing. For example, a pair of Alpine skis have four lateral edges, while a snowboard has two lateral edges. In snowboarding, the users toe and heel are important, as compared to inside and outside edges in skiing. In the present version, the apparatus **10** includes one or more indicia **20**, such as one or a series of tangerine colored circles **52** for the edge of the apparatus **10** where the user's toes should be pointing, and one or a series of heather colored squares **54** for the edge of the apparatus **10** where the user's heals should be pointing. Similar to the ski version, the present version may include two separate and spaced apart arrows or guide paths **24**, where the narrower the path **24** means the more that the user should be on the edge of the snowboard **12**.

[0068] Similar to the ski versions, the snowboard versions of the apparatus **10** are designed to be read from the bottom toward the top of the apparatus **10**. For example, as shown in FIG. **21**, the first instruction for an experienced snowboarder may be text **40**, such as "READY?" Next, additional text **40** may guide the user, such as "PICK AN EDGE." Additional text **40** may be displayed to tell the user where to place pressure, such as "TOE PRESSURE" or "HEEL PRESSURE," depending upon the user's selection of an edge. As shown in FIG. **21**, additional text, arrows and/or icons may be used to guide the user through the proper snowboarding technique.

[0069] FIGS. **22** and **23** show versions of the apparatus **10** designed for surfboards **12** and skateboards **12**, respectively, wherein features similar to those shown in the ski version are shown with like reference numerals throughout. Description of certain like features may be omitted herein for convenience and brevity. In one embodiment, a caution or warning label may be placed or located proximate to a tail **60** of the vehicle **12**. In the surfboard version shown in FIG. **22**, the apparatus **10** may include a designated section **62** for the placement of the user's when paddling. This is important because placing the user's toes on the board help prevent draft when paddling. Both versions of the apparatus **10** may include a center or striker line **64** which extends along a longitudinal axis of the vehicle **12**. It can be important for the user to locate the striker line **63** on the apparatus **10** to help the user operate the vehicle **12** with proficient movements. A distal end of the striker line **64** leads to a nose **65** of the vehicle **12**.

[0070] A first or melon-colored area or graphic **66** may be located at a middle region of the apparatus **10**. The first area **66** may vary among embodiments of the invention. In one embodiment, the first area **66** helps to generally identify a

point of buoyancy on the vehicle **12**. As understood by those skilled in the art, the location of the first area **66** will vary due to the size of the vehicle **12**, construction of the vehicle **12**, and/or the weight and height of the user. The first area **66** may designated for two reasons. First, when paddling (lying flat on vehicle **12**), the user's core mass must be on a specific place on the vehicle. Once the beginner surfer gets to their feet, the core mass of the surfer should be in this regions which enables user to surf or other with operate the vehicle **12** in the correct way. Most beginners cannot identify these specific and highly important regions of the vehicle **12**. Indicia on the vehicle **12** will guide user in a similar manner to the ski version described in detail above.

[0071] The first area **66** identifies where the user's mass should be when paddling and/or when surfing or skateboarding upright. In front of and behind (as measured along the longitudinal axis) the first area **66**, the apparatus **10** may include a second area **68** and a third area **70**. The second and third areas **68**, **70** generally identify where the user's left and/or right foot should be placed when surfing or skateboarding upright. A horizontally-extending line **72**, located proximate to the nose **65** of the vehicle **12**, may help a user line-up where the vehicle **12** should be pointed to move the vehicle **12** in a desired direction.

[0072] When a user falls off a skateboard **12** or a surfboard **12**, the nose **65** and tail **60** are difficult to identify. Both boards **12** do not bind the user's feet, as do skis and snowboard. Both skateboards **12** and surfboards **12** operate with the same principles that apply to skiing and snowboarding. There are similar physics, movement patterns, physical operation and safety cross-over from one board sport to another. All board sports can involve injury if the board is not controlled or operated properly.

[0073] In one embodiment, one or a series of icons or symbols **52**, **54** along the edges of both the surfboard **12** and the skateboard **12** will assist the user with weight distribution when turning vehicle **12**. One symbol (circles **54**) may indicate right turn, while the other (e.g., squares **52**) may indicate left turn. All indicia are designed to help user understand where the user's body should be on the vehicle **12**, and will assist the user with the correct maneuvers to preform when operating these boards.

[0074] It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that changes could be made to the embodiments described above without departing from the broad inventive concept thereof. It is understood, therefore, that this invention is not limited to the particular embodiments disclosed, but it is intended to cover modifications within the spirit and scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A method of instructing an individual to ski, the method comprising:

attaching at least a portion of a bottom surface of a first apparatus to at least a portion of a top surface of a left ski, a top surface of the first apparatus including indicia that instructs the individual how to maneuver the ski; and

attaching at least a portion of a bottom surface of a second apparatus to at least a portion of a top surface of a right ski, a top surface of the second apparatus including indicia that instructs the individual how to maneuver the ski, the indicia of the second apparatus being presented in different layout than the indicia of the first apparatus.

2. The method according to claim **1**, further comprising:

instructing the individual to review the indicia on each apparatus from a proximal end to a distal end thereof.

3. The method according to claim **2**, further comprising:

removing the first and second apparatus from the top surface of the skis after a predetermined period of time.

3. The method according to claim **3**, wherein the bottom surface of each apparatus includes adhesive.

4. The method according to claim **2**, wherein the indicia of the first and second apparatus includes text, at least one arrow and pressure images of feet.

5. The method according to claim **1**, wherein the first apparatus is positioned on the left ski between a tip of the ski and a front binding of the ski.

6. The method according to claim **5**, wherein a length of the first apparatus is at least twelve inches and a width of the first apparatus is at least three inches.

7. The method according to claim **6**, wherein the first apparatus has a tapered shape.

8. The method according to claim **1**, further comprising:

placing a red-colored strap around at least a portion of the individual's right thumb; and

placing a lime-colored strap around at least a portion of the individual's left them.

9. The method according to claim **8**, wherein a right edge of each apparatus includes a plurality of red-colored icons, and wherein a left edge of each apparatus includes a plurality of lime-colored icons.

10. A system for instructing an individual how to ski, the system comprising:

a first ski having a top surface and a bottom surface;

a second ski having a top surface and a bottom surface;

a first apparatus having a top surface and an opposing bottom surface, the top surface including indicia thereon, the indicia including text, at least one arrow and pressure images of feet, the indicia being displayed in at least two colors, the bottom surface of the first apparatus contacting the top surface of the first ski; and

a second apparatus having a top surface and an opposing bottom surface, the top surface including indicia thereon, the indicia including text, at least one arrow and pressure images of feet, the indicia being displayed in at least two colors, the bottom surface of the second apparatus contacting the top surface of the second ski,

wherein the indicia on both the first and second apparatus instruct the individual how to properly maneuver the skis when viewed in succession from a proximal end of each apparatus to a distal end of each apparatus.

11. The system according to claim **10**, wherein the apparatus have an identical size and shape.

12. The system according to claim **11**, wherein a plurality of identical icons extend along a left edge of the first apparatus, wherein a plurality of identical icons extend along a left edge of the second apparatus, and wherein each icon of the plurality of identical icons of the second apparatus are larger than each icon of the plurality of identical icons of the first apparatus.

13. The system according to claim **12**, wherein the identical icons of both the first and second apparatus are limes.

14. The system according to claim **11**, wherein a length of the each apparatus is at least twelve inches and a width of the each apparatus is at least three inches.

15. The system according to claim **10**, wherein the at least one arrow of the indicia of the first apparatus includes two spaced-apart arrows, and wherein each arrow has a greater width at a proximal end thereof than at a distal end thereof.

16. The system according to claim **10**, wherein each apparatus includes a left half and a right half, and wherein the left half having a lime color background and the right half having a red color background.

17. The system according to claim **16**, wherein the lime color instructs the user to focus on the left half when making a left turn, and wherein the red color instruct the user to focus on the right half when making a right turn.

18. The system according to claim **10**, further comprising:

a red-colored strap configured to extend around at least a portion of the individual's right thumb; and

a lime-colored strap configured to extend around at least a portion of the individual's left thumb.

19. An apparatus for instructing an individual how to ski, the apparatus comprising:

a top surface, an opposing bottom surface, a proximal end and an opposing distal end, the top surface including indicia thereon or therein, the indicia including a left arrow positioned in a left half of the top surface and a right arrow positioned in a right half of the top surface, the right arrow being longer than the left arrow as measured along a longitudinal axis of the apparatus from the proximal end to the distal end, each arrow having a greater width at a proximal end thereof than at a distal end thereof, the indicia further including at least one pressure diagram of a bottom of a foot superimposed over at least a portion of the left arrow and at least three spaced-apart pressure diagrams of a foot superimposed over at least a portion of the right arrow, the apparatus being configured to attach to a top surface of the ski between a front tip and front binding of the ski.

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