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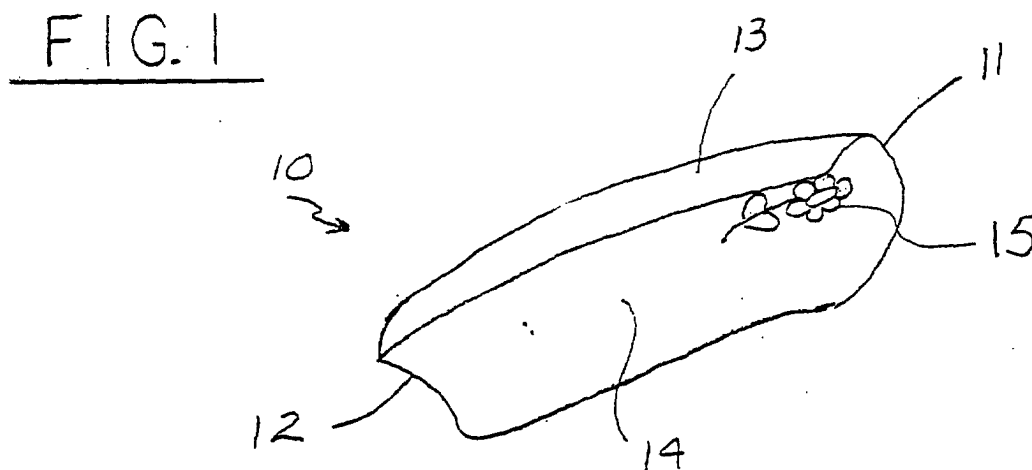
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(54) **Artificial nail having design on underside**

(57) An artificial nail for attachment to a natural nail includes a nail body (12) having a proximal end sized and shaped to be attachable to the top surface of the

natural nail, a distal end, a top surface (13), a bottom surface (14) and a design (15) on the bottom surface (14).



Description

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates generally to artificial nails that are applied to natural nails with an adhesive, and more particularly to an artificial nail having a decorative design on an underside thereof.

[0002] Artificial nails have been used for many years to enhance the cosmetic appearance of the fingers. Some individuals opt to use artificial nails because their own nails are too weak to grow to a desirable length without breaking. Others choose artificial nails because they are considerably stronger and more durable than natural nails, and because nail polish adheres better to the artificial nail surface. Some individuals are unhappy with the shape and contour of their natural nail and opt to use an artificial nail to improve the appearance of their nails.

[0003] It has been known in the art of adorning the hands to provide ornamental fingernail accessories made from thin, molded plastic members manufactured generally in the shape of a fingernail. Indeed, numerous artificial fingernail manufacturers have provided a variety of combinations of materials, arrangements, and colors in fingernail accessories. With the advent of such artificial fingernail accessories, the wearer could now have intricately pre-designed fingernails that are simply attached to the natural fingernail and then later easily removed.

[0004] Conventional pre-designed fingernails include a decorative design stenciled or air-brushed on a top surface thereof. The pre-designed artificial nail is glued to the surface of the natural nail by applying an amount of a liquid bonding adhesive to the bottom surface of the artificial nail and/or the top surface of the natural nail to affix the accessory to the nail. Usually the wearer must wipe or trim away any excess adhesive and then wait several moments until the adhesive dries to ensure that the accessory is secured to the nail. An overlay is then typically applied to the entire top surface of the artificial nail. The overlay is usually transparent or translucent so that the decorative design is visible on the top surface of the artificial nail. Once the overlay sets, the artificial nail is shaped as desired.

[0005] While it is common to provide pre-designed artificial nails with a decorative design on a top surface thereof, it has been heretofore unknown to provide a pre-designed artificial nail with a decorative design on the bottom surface or underside thereof. Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an ornamental artificial nail having such a unique decorative feature.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The present invention is an artificial nail for attachment to a natural nail which includes a nail body

having a proximal end sized and shaped to be attachable to the top surface of the natural nail, a distal end, a top surface, a bottom surface and a design on the bottom surface. "Artificial nail", as used herein also includes fingernail extensions, referred to in the trade as "tips", which will be more fully explained hereinbelow. Preferably, the distal end of the artificial nail is sized to extend beyond the end of the natural nail when the artificial nail is attached thereto.

[0007] In a preferred embodiment, the design is positioned on the bottom surface of the outwardly extending distal end of the nail body so as to be visible from the underside of the artificial nail when the nail is attached to the natural nail. Alternatively, the design may encompass substantially the entire bottom surface of the nail body. The design may be a decorative design, or it may include indicia, e.g., numbers, letters, etc. Preferably, the nail body is a one-piece injection molded body made from either a transparent or opaque material. An opaque coating may additionally be applied to the top surface of the nail body.

[0008] The artificial nail may be a full cover, wherein the proximal end of the nail body is sized and shaped to substantially correspond to the full nail bed of the natural nail, or the artificial nail may be a nail tip, wherein the proximal end of the nail body is sized and shaped to be attachable to only the distal end of the natural nail.

[0009] As a result of the present invention, an artificial nail having a unique decorative feature is provided. In particular, an artificial nail having a decorative design on a bottom surface thereof is provided. The result is a cosmetically appealing artificial nail having a decorative feature which is visible from the underside thereof.

[0010] Other objects and features of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. It is to be understood, however, that the drawings are designed as an illustration only and not as a definition of the limits of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011]

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the underside of the artificial nail formed in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a view of a human hand having various embodiments of the artificial nail of the present invention attached to the natural fingernails thereof.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0012] Referring first to FIG. 1, an artificial nail formed in accordance with the present invention is shown. The artificial nail is preferably a one-piece molded body 10

having a distal end 11, a proximal end 12, a top surface 13 and a bottom surface 14. The proximal end 12 and, more particularly, the bottom surface 14 adjacent the proximal end 12 is sized and shaped to be attachable to the top surface of a natural nail. Preferably, the distal end 11 is sized to extend beyond the end of the natural nail when the artificial nail is attached to the natural nail.

[0013] The nail body 10 is preferably injection molded from a plastic material such as ABS plastic, and is generally rectangular in shape. The plastic material can be transparent or opaque. The distal end 11 can be rounded as shown in FIG. 1 or it can be straight. The artificial nail is not limited to any particular dimensions. In other words, the artificial nail of the present invention is useful for fingernails and/or toenails and can be made in a variety of sizes and shapes. For instance, the proximal end 12 of the nail body 10 may substantially correspond in size and shape to the full nail bed of a natural fingernail, whereby the artificial nail is termed a full nail cover 16 that is applied over the full nail bed of a natural fingernail, as shown on the thumb and index finger of the hand 18 in FIG. 2. Alternatively, the proximal end 12 may be attachable to only the distal end of a natural fingernail, that is, for example, it may correspond in size and shape to only the distal end of the natural nail bed, whereby the artificial nail is termed a nail tip 17 that is applied to the end of the natural fingernail, as shown on the pinky and middle finger of the hand 18 in FIG. 2. Once properly applied, however, it is often difficult to distinguish a tip from a cover, particularly when viewed from the palm side of the hand, as illustrated by the hand 18 of FIG. 2, which shows a full size artificial nail "cover" 16 applied to the index finger next to an artificial nail "tip" 17 applied to the middle finger.

[0014] Positioned on the bottom surface 14, preferably at the distal end 11 is a predefined design 15, which is applied by any conventional means, such as by painting, stenciling or air-brushing. The design 15 may be a decorative design, as shown in FIG. 1, or it may be in the form of indicia, such as letters or numbers.

[0015] FIG. 2 illustrates a hand 18 having several alternative embodiments of the present invention attached to the fingernails thereof. As mentioned above, the design 15 is preferably positioned on the bottom surface 14 of the body 10 at the distal end 11 thereof, as shown by the artificial nails 19 of FIG. 2. In this manner, when the artificial nail 19 is attached to the natural nail, the design 15 is visible from the palm side of the hand because the distal end 11 of the artificial nail extends beyond the end of the natural nail.

[0016] Alternatively, particularly where the nail body 12 is made from a transparent material, the design 15 may encompass the entire bottom surface of the nail body, as shown by the artificial nail 20 of FIG. 2. In this embodiment, because the nail body 10 is transparent, the design 15 on the bottom surface 14 is visible through the nail body from the top surface 13. The top surface 13 may then be left alone, or the design 15 may serve

as a template for the user or a nail technician to apply a matching design to the top surface by painting or air-brushing.

[0017] Artificial full nail cover 16 and nail tip 17 of FIG. 2 are further exemplary of nail bodies made from an opaque material and/or nail bodies having an opaque coating applied to the top surfaces thereof. In this embodiment, the design 15 would not be visible from the top surface 13 of the nail body 10. Thus, the design 15 would only be visible from the palm side of the hand 18.

[0018] Many other design combinations are possible. For example, the nail body 10 may additionally include a design on the top surface 13 that is the same as or different than the design 15 on the bottom surface 14. Additionally, the top surface 13 and the bottom surface 14 may include designs that are identical but have backgrounds that differ.

[0019] While there has been described what is presently believed to be the preferred embodiments of the invention, those skilled in the art will realize that various changes and modifications may be made to the invention without departing from the spirit of the invention, and it is intended to claim all such changes and modifications as fall within the scope of the invention.

Claims

1. An artificial nail for attachment to a natural nail comprising a nail body having a proximal end sized and shaped to be attachable to the top surface of the natural nail, a distal end, a top surface, a bottom surface and a design on the bottom surface.
2. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 1, wherein said distal end is sized to extend beyond the end of the natural nail when the artificial nail is attached thereto.
3. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 2, wherein said design is positioned at said distal end on said bottom surface so as to be visible from the underside of said nail body when said nail body is attached to the natural nail.
4. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 1, wherein said design is a decorative design.
5. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 1, wherein said design comprises indicia.
6. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 1, wherein said nail body is a one-piece injection molded body.
7. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 1, wherein said nail body is made from a transparent material.
8. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 1, wherein said

nail body is made from an opaque material.

9. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 1, wherein said proximal end of said nail body is sized and shaped to substantially correspond to the full nail bed of the natural nail. 5
10. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 1, wherein said proximal end of said nail body is sized and shaped to be attachable to only the distal end of the natural nail. 10
11. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 1, wherein said design encompasses substantially all of said bottom surface of said nail body. 15
12. The artificial nail as defined in Claim 1, further comprising an opaque coating on said top surface of said nail body. 20

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FIG. 1

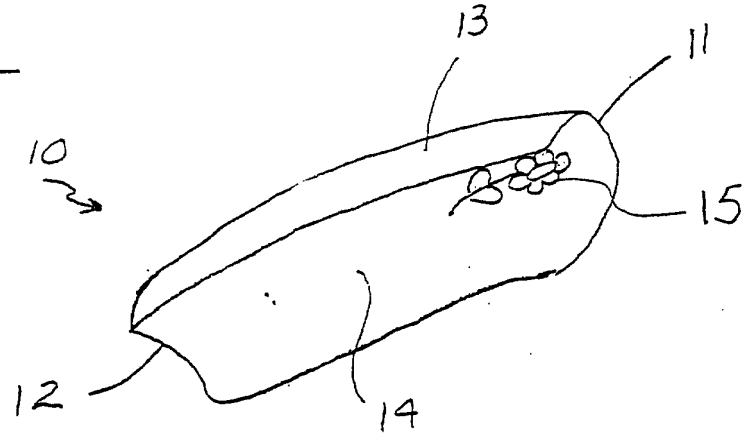
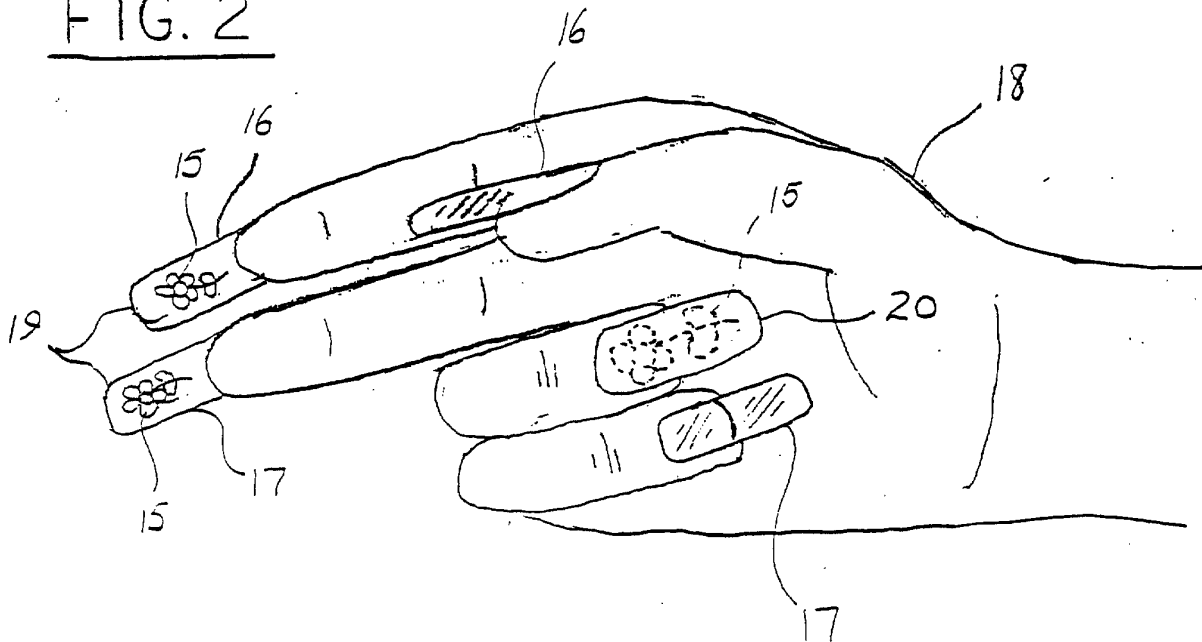


FIG. 2





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 02 39 4079

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search MUNICH		Date of completion of the search 2 October 2002	Examiner Lang, D
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 02 39 4079

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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