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(71) Applicant: **Greasley, Laura Joanne
Thurmaston
Leicester
Leicestershire LE4 8LA (GB)**

(72) Inventor: **Greasley, Laura Joanne
Thurmaston
Leicester
Leicestershire LE4 8LA (GB)**

(74) Representative: **Lichota, Catherine Margaret
Timmis
Franks & Co (South) Limited
Carlton House
26 Billing Road
GB-Northampton NN1 5AT (GB)**

(54) **An undergarment**

(57) An undergarment apparatus (501) for, and a method (601) of, providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth. An undergarment element (102) has a front (105) and a rear (106). First and second pairs of elastic side panels (103, 104; 401, 402) are detachably connectable between the front (105) and the rear (106) of the undergarment element (12) to provide an undergarment having an undergarment girth. The first and second pairs of elastic side panels (103, 104; 401, 402) have different ranges of predetermined selectable connected lengths. The undergarment girth is manually adjustable by adjusting the connected length of a connected side panel and is further adjustable by detaching a connected side panel and attaching an alternative side panel that provides a different connected length.

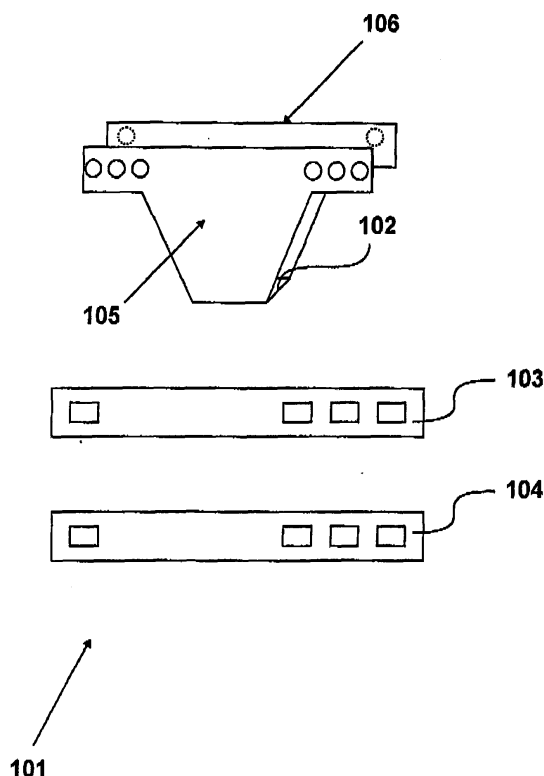


FIGURE 1

Description

Field of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates to an undergarment, in particular to undergarment apparatus for providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth and a method of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth.

Background of the Invention

[0002] Undergarments have been used by individuals for many years to protect the outerwear from bodily fluids. As fashion has progressed the undergarment market has been evolving new styles of undergarments ranging from g strings, boxer shorts, thongs, bloomers, briefs etc. As fashion has evolved the goal has remained the same, to fit the body and to accentuate shape. Whilst the undergarment styles are generally manufactured in standard sizes, utilizing elastic to cater for individual requirements, this commonly causes the individual to have unsightly bulges above and below the elastic. The consumer may purchase the next size available however this can cause the same unsightly bulges and the consumer is left with extra material on the front and the back of the undergarment.

[0003] Individuals have also been keen to follow fashion trends whilst pregnant and whilst there is a variety of maternity underwear readily available to women they are still required to buy several sizes of undergarments throughout their pregnancy. As women are buying bigger underwear to accommodate for weight gained on the stomach they are left with unflattering extra material, common problems are undergarments raised too high at the back or gaping material on the front and back pubic area.

Summary of the Invention

[0004] According to a first aspect there is provided undergarment apparatus for providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth, comprising: comprising: an undergarment element having a front and a rear, and a pair of elastic side panels detachably connectable between the front and the rear of said undergarment element; said undergarment apparatus is configured such that, when said undergarment element and said pair of elastic side panels are connected, an undergarment having an undergarment girth is provided and each of said pair of elastic side panels presents a connected length between the front and the rear of said undergarment element, and said undergarment apparatus is configured such that a plurality of selectable connected lengths is available for each of said pair of elastic side panels and said undergarment girth is manually adjustable by adjusting the connected length of at least one of said pair of elastic side panels; and the length of each of said plu-

ality of selectable connected lengths available for each of said pair of elastic side panels is predetermined; wherein said undergarment apparatus comprises a second alternative pair of said elastic side panels; and each of said pair of elastic side panels has a first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths, each of said second alternative pair of said elastic side panels has a second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths, and said second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths is different from said first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths.

[0005] According to a second aspect there is provided a method of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth, comprising the steps of: providing an undergarment element having a front and a rear; providing a first pair of elastic side panels detachably connectable between the front and the rear of said undergarment element such that, when connected, an undergarment having an adjustable girth is provided and each of said first pair of elastic side panels presents one of an available plurality of predetermined selectable connected lengths between the front and the rear of said undergarment element, each of said first pair of elastic side panels having a first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths; and providing a second alternative pair of said elastic side panels detachably connectable between the front and the rear of said undergarment element such that, when connected, an undergarment having an adjustable girth is provided and each of said second alternative pair of said elastic side panels presents one of an available plurality of predetermined selectable connected lengths between the front and the rear of said undergarment element, each of said second alternative pair of said elastic side panels having a second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths that is different from said first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths of each of said first pair of elastic side panels.

[0006] The configuration of the undergarment apparatus allows an individual to manually adjust the girth of their undergarment. The individual will manually be able to increase or decrease the girth of their undergarment.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0007] For a better understanding of the invention and to show how the same may be carried into effect, there will now be described by way of example only, specific embodiments, methods and processes according to the present invention with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 shows an undergarment element and a pair of side panels detachably connectable to the undergarment element;

Figure 2 shows features of the undergarment apparatus of *Figure 1* in further detail;

Figure 3 illustrates the undergarment apparatus of

Figure 1 in different connected arrangements;
 Figure 4 illustrates pairs of alternative side panels detachably connectable to an undergarment element;
 Figure 5 shows an undergarment element and first and second pairs of side panels detachably connectable to the undergarment element; and
 Figure 6 shows steps in a method of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth.

Detailed Description of the Embodiments

[0008] There will now be described by way of example a specific mode contemplated by the inventor. In the following description numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding. It will be apparent however, to one skilled in the art, that the present invention may be practiced without limitation to these specific details. In other instances, well known methods and structures have not been described in detail so as not to unnecessarily obscure the description.

Figure 1

[0009] Figure 1 shows undergarment apparatus 101 comprising an undergarment element 102, and a pair of elastic side panels 103, 104. The undergarment element 102 has a front, indicated at 105, and a rear, indicated at 106. The elastic side panels 103, 104 are detachably connectable to the undergarment element 102 to provide an undergarment having a girth,

[0010] As will be described in further detail below, the undergarment apparatus 101 provides an undergarment with an adjustable girth. The undergarment apparatus 101 allows a user to adjust the girth of their undergarment. As will further be described below, the undergarment apparatus 101 provides a user with an undergarment with an adjustable girth and a comfortable fit.

Figure 2

[0011] Figure 2 shows features of the undergarment apparatus 101 of Figure 1 in further detail. The undergarment element 102 comprises a front left fastener 201 and a rear left fastener 202, and comprises a front right fastener 203 and a rear right fastener 204.

[0012] Elastic side panel 103 defines a first rear aperture 205 at a first end and a first front aperture 206 at the other end. The first rear aperture 205 is configured for use with the rear left fastener 202 of the undergarment element 102. The first front aperture 206 is configured for use with the front left fastener 201 of the undergarment element 102. Elastic side panel 104 also defines a first rear aperture 207 at one end and a first front aperture 208 at the other end. The first rear aperture 207 is configured for use with the rear right fastener 204 of the undergarment element 102. The first front aperture 208 is configured for use with the front right fastener 203 of the

undergarment element 102. When the elastic side panel 103 is connected between the front left fastener 201 and the rear left fastener 202 of the undergarment element 102, and the elastic side panel 104 is connected between the front right fastener 203 and the rear right fastener 204 of the undergarment element 102, an undergarment having a girth is provided. The undergarment apparatus is configured such that, when the undergarment element and the pair of side panels are connected, an undergarment having an undergarment girth is provided and each of the pair of side panels presents a connected length between the front and the rear of the undergarment element.

[0013] As illustrated, elastic side panel 103 also defines a second front aperture 209 and a third front aperture 210, both of which are configured for use with the front left fastener 201. Similarly, elastic side panel 104 further defines a second front aperture 211 and a third front aperture 212, both of which are configured for use with the front right fastener 203. It is to be appreciated that the connected length of the first side panel 103 may be varied by selecting which of the front apertures 206, 209 and 210 are connected with the front left fastener 201 of the undergarment element 102, with the rear aperture 205 connected with the rear left fastener 202 of the undergarment element 102. Similarly, the connected length of the second side panel 104 may be varied by selecting which of the front apertures 208, 211 and 212 are connected with the front right fastener 203 of the undergarment element 102, with the rear aperture 207 connected with the rear right fastener 204 of the undergarment element 102.

[0014] As further illustrated, undergarment element 102 comprises a second front left fastener 213 and a third front left fastener 214, both configured for use with each of the front apertures 206, 209 and 210 of the first side panel 103. Undergarment element 102 further comprises a second front right fastener 215 and a third front right fastener 216, both configured for use with each of the front apertures 208, 211 and 212 of the second side panel 104. It is to be further appreciated that the connected length of the first side panel 103 may be varied by selecting which of the front apertures 206, 209 and 210 are connected with which of the front left fasteners 201, 213, 214 of the undergarment element 102, with the rear aperture 205 connected with the rear left fastener 202 of the undergarment element 102. Similarly, the connected length of the second side panel 104 may be varied by selecting which of the front apertures 208, 211 and 212 are connected with which of the front right fasteners 203, 215, 216 of the undergarment element 102, with the rear aperture 207 connected with the rear right fastener 204 of the undergarment element 102.

[0015] The undergarment apparatus 101 is configured such that a plurality of selectable connected lengths is available for each of the pair of side panels 103, 104 and the undergarment girth is manually adjustable by adjusting the connected length of at least one of the pair of side

panels 103, 104. The length of each of the plurality of selectable connected lengths available for each of the pair of side panels 103, 104 is predetermined.

Figure 3

[0016] Figure 3 illustrates the undergarment apparatus of Figures 1 and 2 in different connected arrangements. The rear view shown at 301 is the same for each of the different front views at 302, 303 and 304 of the undergarment apparatus apparatus of Figs. 1 and 2 in different connected arrangements.

[0017] At 301, the first side panel 103 is secured to the rear of the undergarment element 102 by means of the rear aperture 205 being connected with the left rear fastener 202 and the second side panel 104 is secured to the rear of the undergarment element 102 by means of the rear aperture 207 being connected with the left rear fastener 204.

[0018] At 302, the first side panel 103 is secured to the front of the undergarment element 102 by means of the front aperture 206 being connected with the third front left fastener 214, the second front aperture 209 being connected with the second front left fastener 213 and the third front aperture 210 being connected with the front left fastener 206. At 302 also, the second side panel 104 is secured to the front of the undergarment element 102 by means of the front aperture 208 being connected with the third front right fastener 216, the second front aperture 211 being connected with the second front right fastener 215 and the third front aperture 212 being connected with the front right fastener 203. In the connected arrangement shown at 302, the adjustable girth size of the undergarment is at the smallest size available of the predetermined connected lengths provided for by the side panels 103, 104.

[0019] The smallest undergarment girth size is achievable by connecting the third front aperture 210 of the side panel 103 with the front left fastener 201 of the undergarment element 102 and by connecting the third front aperture 212 of the side panel 104 with the front right fastener 203 of the undergarment element 102, as shown. However, the other front apertures 209, 206 of the side panel 103 may be connected to the other front fasteners 213, 214 in a linear fashion, and likewise the other front apertures 208, 211 of the side panel 104 may be connected to the other front fasteners 215, 216 in a linear fashion, to neatly accommodate the free material at the end of the side panel 103 that would otherwise be loose to the front of the undergarment element 102. In this way, additional side panel material can be concealed.

[0020] At 303, the first side panel 103 is secured to the front of the undergarment element 102 by means of the front aperture 206 being connected with the second front left fastener 213 and the second front aperture 209 being connected with the front left fastener 206. At 303 also, the second side panel 104 is secured to the front of the undergarment element 102 by means of the front aper-

ture 208 being connected with the second front right fastener 215 and the second front aperture 211 being connected with the front right fastener 203. In the connected arrangement shown at 303, the adjustable girth size of the undergarment is at the middle size available of the predetermined connected lengths provided for by the side panels 103, 104.

[0021] The middle undergarment girth size is achievable by connecting the second front aperture 209 of the side panel 103 with the front left fastener 201 of the undergarment element 102 and by connecting the second front aperture 211 of the side panel 104 with the front right fastener 203 of the undergarment element 102, as shown. However, the front aperture 206 of the side panel 103 may be connected to the second left fastener 213 in a linear fashion, and likewise the front aperture 208 of the side panel 104 may be connected to the second front right fastener 215 in a linear fashion, to neatly accommodate the free material at the end of the side panel 103 that would otherwise be loose to the front of the undergarment element 102. In this way, additional side panel material can be concealed.

[0022] At 304, the first side panel 103 is secured to the front of the undergarment element 102 by means of the front aperture 206 being connected with the front left fastener 201. At 304 also, the second side panel 104 is secured to the front of the undergarment element 102 by means of the front aperture 208 being connected with the front right fastener 203. In the connected arrangement shown at 304, the adjustable girth size of the undergarment is at the greatest size available of the predetermined connected lengths provided for by the side panels 103, 104.

[0023] The greatest undergarment girth size is achievable by connecting the front aperture 206 of the side panel 103 with the front left fastener 201 of the undergarment element 102 and by connecting the front aperture 208 of the side panel 104 with the front right fastener 203 of the undergarment element 102, as shown.

[0024] Each of the side panels 103, 104 allows for one of a plurality of predetermined connected lengths to be selected, to adjust the girth of the undergarment 102. The side panels 103, 104 are manually adjustable by a user to increase the girth of the undergarment 102 and/or decrease the girth of the undergarment 102. The size of the undergarment girth may be adjusted across the available range of predetermined selectable connected lengths of the pair of side panels.

[0025] The side panels 103, 104 of undergarment apparatus 101 are substantially the same. Each of the side panels 103, 104 has the same number of rear apertures and front apertures, in substantially the same relative positions along the length of the side panel, and each of the pair of side panels 103, 104 has the same length. Each of the pair of side panels 103, 104 provides the same predetermined selectable connected lengths as the other and provides the same range of available predetermined selectable connected lengths as the other.

[0026] It is to be understood that according to the configuration of undergarment apparatus 101, although the first side panel 103 is described as being used on the left side of the undergarment element 102 and the second side panel 104 is described as being used on the right side of the undergarment element 102, each of the side panels 103, 104 may be used on the left or the right side of the undergarment element 102.

[0027] Although the undergarment apparatus 101 is configured to provide 3 predetermined selectable connected lengths for each side panel, it is to be appreciated that an undergarment apparatus may be provided with 2 or more than 3 predetermined selectable connected lengths for each side panel. Although the undergarment element 102 of the undergarment apparatus 101 is provided with 3 front left fasteners and 3 front right fasteners, it is to be appreciated that an undergarment element may be provided with 2 or more than 3 front left fasteners and 2 or more than 3 front right fasteners. Although each of the side panels 103, 104 of the undergarment apparatus 101 is provided with 3 front apertures, it is to be appreciated that a side panel may be provided with 2 or more than 3 front apertures. Further, although the undergarment element 102 of the undergarment apparatus 101 is provided with 1 rear left fastener and 1 rear right fastener, an undergarment element may be provided with 2 or more rear left fasteners and 2 or more rear right fasteners. Further still, although each of the side panels 103, 104 of the undergarment apparatus 101 is provided with 1 rear aperture, a side panel may be provided with 2 or more rear apertures.

[0028] Any suitable material or combination of materials may be used in the fabrication of the undergarment element and in the fabrication of the side panels. Any suitable type of fastener may be utilised. In an embodiment, the fasteners of the undergarment element are buttons. The undergarment element and each side panel may have any desired aesthetic appearance. It is to be understood that each of a pair of side panels may be the same as, or differ from, the other.

Figure 4

[0029] Figure 4 illustrates pairs of alternative elastic side panels detachably connectable to an undergarment element of an undergarment apparatus. The alternative side panels of Figure 4 are each usable with undergarment element 102. Each alternative side panel 401-406 is similar to each of the side panels 103, 104, in that each alternative side panel 401-406 also defines a single rear aperture and a series of three front apertures, but also differs from each of the side panels 103, 104 as will now be described.

[0030] Each of the pair of side panels 103, 104 has a length L1. Each of a second pair of side panels 401, 402 has a length L2 that is different from the length L1. In this illustrated example, the length L2 is greater than the length L1. Each of a third pair of side panels 403, 404

has a length L3 that is different from the length L2, and from the length L1. In this illustrated example, the length L3 is greater than the length L2.

[0031] Each of the pair of side panels 103, 104 has a distance D1 between the rear aperture and the plurality of front apertures. Each of the second pair of side panels 401, 402 has a distance D2 between the rear aperture and the plurality of front apertures. In this illustrated example, the distance D2 is greater than the distance D1. Each of the third pair of side panels 403, 404 has a distance D3 between the rear aperture and the plurality of front apertures that is different from the distance D2 and different from the distance D3. In this illustrated example, the distance D3 is greater than the distance D2.

[0032] It is to be appreciated that, in combination with the undergarment element 102, the first pair of side panels 103, 104 has a first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths, the second pair of side panels 401, 402 has a second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths that is different from the first range and the third pair of side panels 403, 404 has a third range of predetermined selectable connected lengths that is different from the second range and the first range.

[0033] However, it is to be understood that a first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths of a first pair of side panels may have a predetermined selectable connected length that is that same as a predetermined selectable connected length in a second different range of predetermined selectable connected lengths of a second alternative pair of side panels. Thus, for example, the greatest selectable connected length of a first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths of a first pair of side panels may be the same as the smallest selectable connected length of a second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths of a second alternative pair of side panels.

[0034] As described, an undergarment apparatus comprises an undergarment element having a front and a rear, and a pair of elastic side panels detachably connectable between the front and the rear of the undergarment element. The undergarment apparatus is configured such that, when the undergarment element and the pair of side panels are connected, an undergarment having an undergarment girth is provided and each of said pair of side panels presents a connected length between the front and the rear of said undergarment element. The undergarment apparatus is configured such that a plurality of selectable connected lengths is available for each of the pair of side panels and the undergarment girth is manually adjustable by adjusting the connected length of at least one of the pair of side panels.

[0035] The elastic nature of the side panels provides comfort for the user, and accommodates a variation in girth size. The first range of selectable connected lengths of the side panels allows a user to adjust the undergarment girth to accommodate a change in girth size.

[0036] Preferably, the undergarment apparatus further comprises a second alternative pair of said side panels

having a second different range of selectable connected lengths. The provision of a second alternative pair of said side panels allows the user to change side panels. The second range of selectable connected lengths of the alternative side panels allows a user to adjust the undergarment girth to accommodate a change in girth size.

[0037] Figure 4 also shows a fourth alternative pair of side panels 405, 406. The fourth pair of side panels 405, 406 is similar to the third pair of side panels 403, 404 in that each of the fourth pair of side panels 405, 406 has same length L3 and the same distance D3 between the rear aperture and the plurality of front apertures, as each of the third pair of side panels 403, 404. However, the fourth pair of side panels 405, 406 differs from the third pair of side panels 403, 404 in aesthetic appearance. Thus, different side panels may be used with a particular undergarment element in order to change the overall aesthetic appearance of the resultant undergarment.

Figure 5

[0038] Figure 5 shows undergarment apparatus 501 comprising an undergarment element 102, a pair of elastic side panels 103, 104 and a second alternative pair of elastic side panels 401, 402.

[0039] Undergarment apparatus 501 is configured to provide an undergarment having an adjustable girth. The pair of elastic side panels 103, 104 is detachably connectable between the front and the rear of said undergarment element 102. The undergarment apparatus 501 is configured such that, when the undergarment element 102 and the pair of side panels 103, 104 are connected, an undergarment having an undergarment girth is provided and each of the pair of side panels 103, 104 presents a connected length between the front and the rear of said undergarment element 102. The undergarment apparatus 501 is configured such that a plurality of selectable connected lengths is available for each of the pair of side panels 103, 104 and the undergarment girth is manually adjustable by adjusting the connected length of at least one of said pair of side panels 103, 104. The length of each of the plurality of selectable connected lengths available for each of the pair of side panels 103, 104 is predetermined. The undergarment apparatus 501 further comprises a second alternative pair of said side panels 401, 402. Each of the pair of side panels 103, 104 has a first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths, each of the second alternative pair of side panels 401, 402 has a second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths, and the second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths is different from the first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths.

[0040] The undergarment apparatus as described herein enables an individual to manually adjust the girth of their undergarment. The undergarment apparatus as described herein allows an individual to INCREASE the girth of their undergarment in incremental steps, for ex-

ample during pregnancy or to prevent unsightly bulges, and allows an individual to DECREASE the girth of their undergarment in incremental steps, for example post pregnancy or during dieting. For example, a first pair of side panels may be used with an undergarment element to provide an undergarment with a girth size that is comfortable for the user. If the user experiences an increase in their girth, they may be able to adjust the connected length of that first pair of side panels to achieve a new undergarment girth size that is comfortable. If the greatest undergarment girth size achievable using the first pair of side panels is too small, the user can detach the first pair of side panels, select a second alternative pair of side panels that will allow a greater undergarment girth size to be achieved, attach the second alternative pair of side panels and adjust the connected length of that second alternative of side panels as necessary to achieve a new undergarment girth size that is comfortable.

[0041] By way of further example, a first pair of side panels may be used with an undergarment element to provide an undergarment with a girth size that is comfortable for the user. If the user experiences a decrease in their girth, they may be able to adjust the connected length of that first pair of side panels to achieve a new undergarment girth size that is comfortable. If the smallest undergarment girth size achievable using the first pair of side panels is too big, the user can detach the first pair of side panels, select a second alternative pair of side panels that will allow a lesser undergarment girth size to be achieved, attach the second alternative pair of side panels and adjust the connected length of that second alternative of side panels as necessary to achieve a new undergarment girth size that is comfortable.

[0042] The undergarment apparatus described herein allows adjustment of the girth size of an undergarment, enabling a user to keep using an undergarment throughout a change of body size and/or shape. This is cost-effective and convenient for the user. The described undergarment apparatus is suitable for use by any person of any gender, although it is envisaged that the typical user will be a woman. The undergarment apparatus is considered to be particularly suitable for use by a pregnant woman. Maternity side panels may be specifically provided for use with an undergarment element in place of standard side panels.

[0043] The configuration of the undergarment apparatus described herein allows, a user to choose an undergarment element and first and second side panels to create an undergarment having a desired aesthetic appearance. Allowing different side panels to be used with an undergarment element and allowing side panels to be used with different undergarment elements allows a user to 'mix and match' different components of the undergarment. For example, side panels may be chosen to complement an undergarment element or to contrast with an undergarment element. Thus, undergarment apparatus as described herein provides a user with girth size adjustment functionality and style flexibility.

[0044] An undergarment provided by undergarment apparatus as described herein may be altered in various ways to create a flattering and comfortable fit. As the girth of the undergarment can be increased, the tightness around the body can be appropriately reduced so the undergarment will fit the individual more appropriately and reduce the occurrence of unsightly bulges. As the girth of the undergarment can be decreased, the tightness around the body can be appropriately increased so the undergarment will fit the individual more appropriately and reduce the occurrence of unsightly gaping material.

Figure 6

[0045] Figure 6 shows steps in a method 601 of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth. At step 602, an undergarment element having a front and a rear is received. At step 603, a first pair of elastic side panels detachably connectable between the front and the rear of the undergarment element received at step 601 is received. The first pair of elastic side panels are detachably connectable between the front and the rear of the undergarment element such that, when connected, an undergarment having an adjustable girth is provided and each of the first pair of elastic side panels presents one of an available plurality of predetermined selectable connected lengths between the front and the rear of said undergarment element, each of the first pair of elastic side panels having a first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths. At step 604, a second pair of elastic side panels detachably connectable between the front and the rear of the undergarment element received at step 601 is received. The second pair of elastic side panels are detachably connectable between the front and the rear of the undergarment element such that, when connected, an undergarment having an adjustable girth is provided and each of the second alternative pair of said elastic side panels presents one of an available plurality of predetermined selectable connected lengths between the front and the rear of the undergarment element, each of the second alternative pair of elastic side panels having a second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths that is different from the first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths of each of the first pair of elastic side panels. At step 605, first and second side panels of the first and second pairs of side panels provided at steps 603 and 604 are selected and connected to the undergarment element provided at step 602 to create an undergarment having an adjustable girth.

[0046] Thus, an undergarment apparatus for providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth and a method of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth are described herein.

Claims

1. Undergarment apparatus (501) for providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth, comprising:

an undergarment element (102) having a front (105) and a rear (106), and
a pair of elastic side panels (103, 104) detachably connectable between the front (105) and the rear (106) of said undergarment element (102);

said undergarment apparatus (501) is configured such that, when said undergarment element (102) and said pair of elastic side panels (103, 104) are connected, an undergarment having an undergarment girth is provided and each of said pair of elastic side panels (103, 104) presents a connected length between the front (105) and the rear (106) of said undergarment element (102), and

said undergarment apparatus (501) is configured such that a plurality of selectable connected lengths is available for each of said pair of elastic side panels (103, 104) and said undergarment girth is manually adjustable by adjusting the connected length of at least one of said pair of elastic side panels (103, 104); and
the length of each of said plurality of selectable connected lengths available for each of said pair of elastic side panels (103, 104) is predetermined; **characterised in that:**

said undergarment apparatus (501) comprises a second alternative pair of said elastic side panels (401, 402); and

each of said pair of elastic side panels (103, 104) has a first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths,
each of said second alternative pair of said elastic side panels (401, 402) has a second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths, and

said second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths is different from said first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths.

2. Undergarment apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said front (105) of said undergarment element (102) comprises a front left side fastener (201) and a front right side fastener (203),
said rear (106) of said undergarment element (102) comprises a rear left side fastener (202) and a rear right side fastener (204), and
each of said pair of side panels (103, 104) and said second alternative pair of side panels (401, 402) has a first end defining a first fastener aperture (205; 207) and a second end defining a plurality of second fastener apertures (206, 209, 210; 208, 211, 212).

3. Undergarment apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said front (105) of said undergarment element (102) comprises a plurality of front left side fasteners (201, 213, 214) and a plurality of front right side fasteners (203, 215, 216). 5
4. Undergarment apparatus as claimed in any preceding claim for providing an undergarment for a woman. 10
5. Undergarment apparatus as claimed in claim 4 for providing an undergarment for a pregnant woman. 15
6. A method of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth, said method **characterised by** the steps of:
 - providing an undergarment element (102) having a front (105) and a rear (106);
 - providing a first pair of elastic side panels (103, 104) detachably connectable between the front (105) and the rear (106) of said undergarment element (102) such that, when connected, an undergarment having an adjustable girth is provided and each of said first pair of elastic side panels (103, 104) presents one of an available plurality of predetermined selectable connected lengths between the front (105) and the rear (106) of said undergarment element (102), each of said first pair of elastic side panels (103, 104) having a first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths; and 20
 - providing a second alternative pair of said elastic side panels (401, 402) detachably connectable between the front (105) and the rear (106) of said undergarment element (102) such that, when connected, an undergarment having an adjustable girth is provided and each of said second alternative pair of said elastic side panels (401, 402) presents one of an available plurality of predetermined selectable connected lengths between the front (105) and the rear (106) of said undergarment element (102), each of said second alternative pair of elastic side panels (401, 402) having a second range of predetermined selectable connected lengths that is different from said first range of predetermined selectable connected lengths of each of said first pair of elastic side panels (103, 104). 25
7. A method of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth as claimed in claim 6, wherein:
 - said front (105) of said undergarment element (102) comprises a front left side fastener (201) and a front right side fastener, (203) 30
 - said rear (106) of said undergarment element (102) comprises a rear left side fastener (202) and a rear right side fastener (204), and each of said first pair of side panels (103, 104) and said second alternative pair of side panels (401, 402) has a first end defining a first fastener aperture (205; 207) and a second end defining a plurality of second fastener apertures (206, 209, 210; 208, 211, 212). 35
8. A method of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth as claimed in claim 7, wherein said front (105) of said undergarment element (102) comprises a plurality of front left side fasteners (201, 213, 214) and a plurality of front right side fasteners (203, 215, 216). 40
9. A method of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth as claimed in any of claims 6 to 8, wherein said undergarment is for a woman. 45
10. A method of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth as claimed in claim 9, wherein said undergarment is for a pregnant woman. 50
7. A method of providing an undergarment having an adjustable girth as claimed in claim 6, wherein:
 - said front (105) of said undergarment element (102) comprises a front left side fastener (201) and a front right side fastener, (203) 55
 - said rear (106) of said undergarment element (102) comprises a rear left side fastener (202)

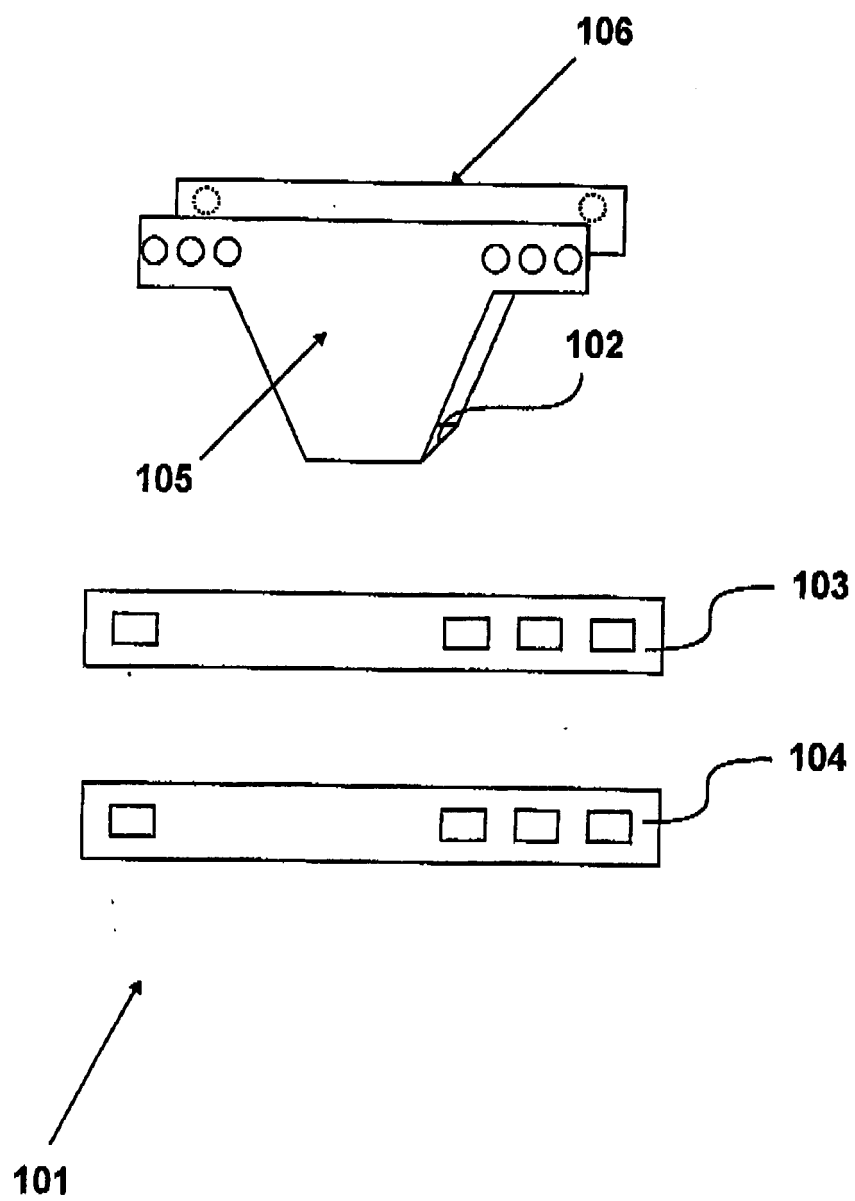


FIGURE 1

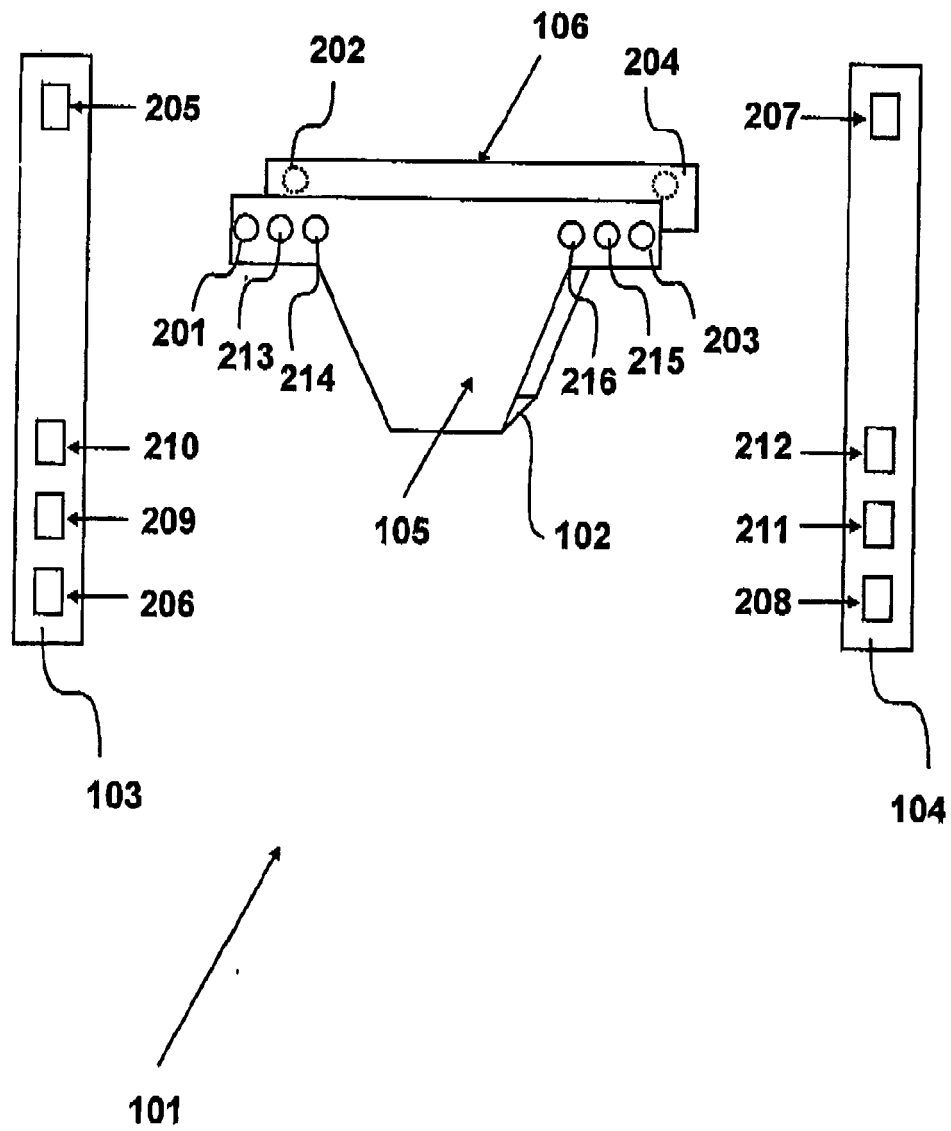


FIGURE 2

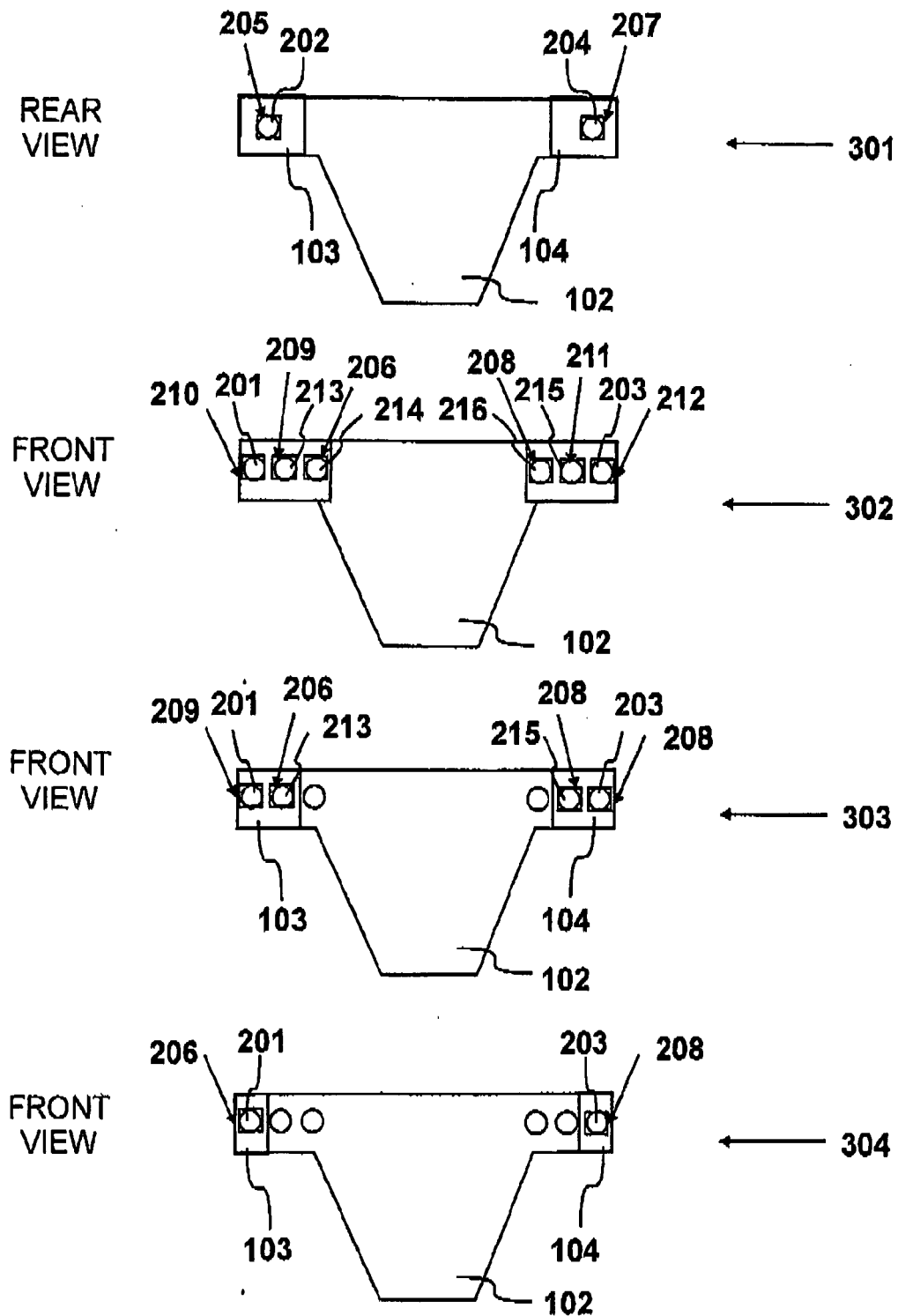


FIGURE 3

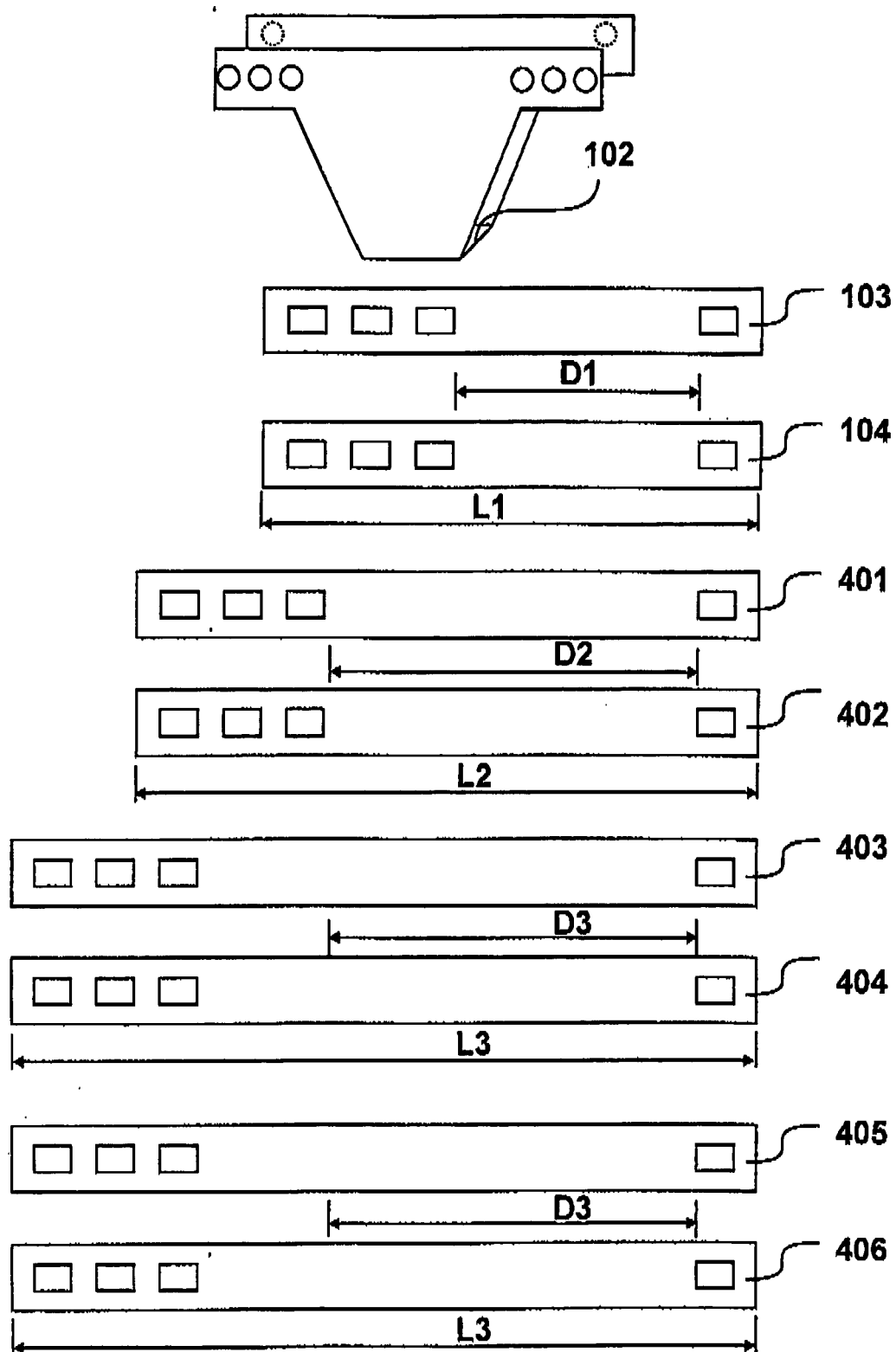


FIGURE 4

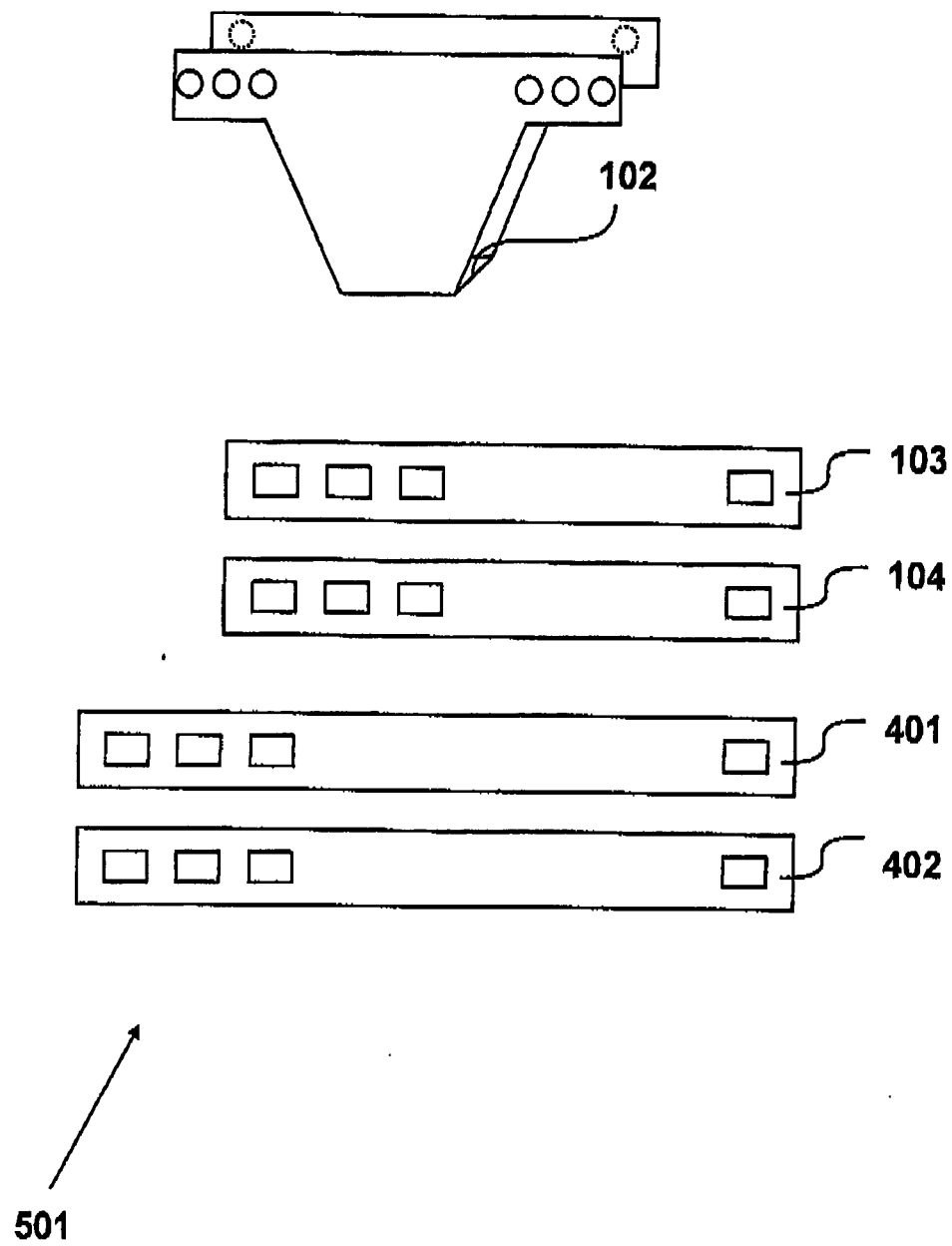


FIGURE 5

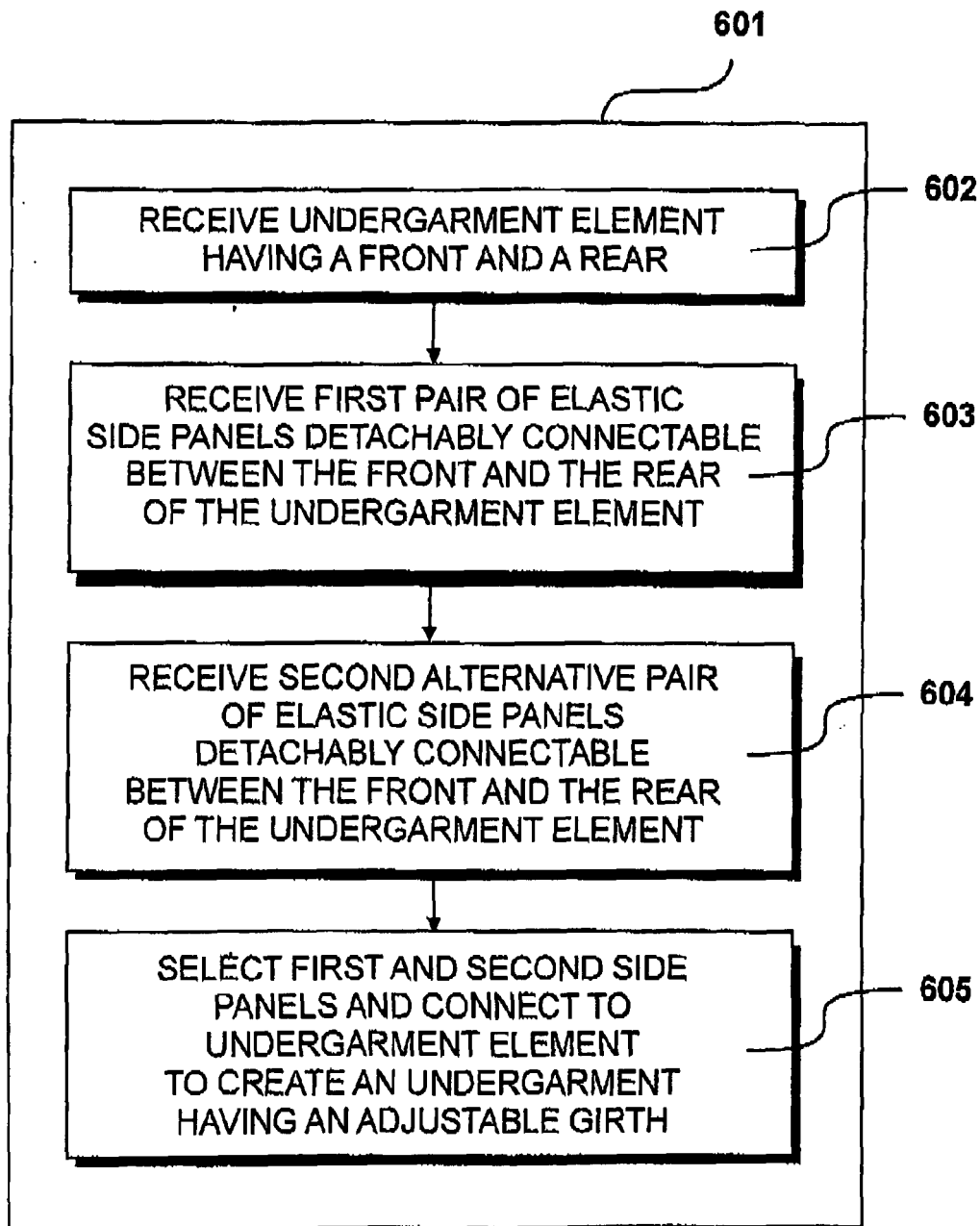


FIGURE 6