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(54) **Active workstation apparatus and method**

(57) An apparatus and method provide various desk structures as workstations to receive a user, standing or sitting, walking or stationary, exercising or sedentary. A double duty desk system may include multiple, dedicated "sitting desks" at seated height and fixed to a shared "standing desk," the height of whose desktop stands accessible to a user exercising on an exercise bike, treadmill, stepper, or the like. A user in an exercise (e.g., stand-

ing) position may view materials set on the standing desk and on the attached sitting desks and returns. Heights of desks may be permanently fixed, adjustable, powered, mechanized, manual, or a combination. A user may selectively exercise or sit, in order to read, browse online, attend webinars, edit, monitor, handwritten, type, lecture, listen, answer phones, make calls, develop software, or the like from a standing or sitting position, at will.

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Description

[0001] This invention relates to exercise apparatus and, more particularly, to novel systems and methods for combining a desk-type work space with exercise apparatus and methods.

[0002] For decades, work space, particularly desks constructed as work space or workstations for individuals, have continued a development approach that minimizes motion. Particularly, one objective appears to be the minimizing of any need of a worker to rise out of a desk chair to reach for anything in the work space. Thus, shelving, desktop (work surface), drawers, shelves, racks, and so forth are placed within arm's reach.

[0003] Chair designs and flooring now accommodate chairs having casters that permit a chair to easily roll on a comparatively harder pad, even on carpeted area, by which a worker may move between areas of a desk or work space without rising from the seat. This is probably excellent engineering for efficiency, minimal energy, maintaining focus, and otherwise maintaining a center of work on the user.

[0004] Nevertheless, technology workers, business people, secretaries, transcriptionists, engineers, designers, programmers, customer service representatives, sales persons, and so forth now spend numerous hours seated at a desk. Moreover, long hours, urgent deadlines, demanding projects and customers, long commutes, and other factors combine to consume free time, or that portion of a day that may have been free time in previous generations.

[0005] What is needed is a system and method for providing ready access to work space that is fixed, semi permanently, in order to be immediately accessible, while providing ability for physical activity. For example, it would be an advance in the art to provide a workstation having multiple desk surfaces, such as a main desk accessible in a seated position from a chair, and a standing desk accessible by standing upright. One of these may be arranged over a unit of exercise equipment, such as an exercise bicycle, treadmill, or the like.

[0006] It would be a further advance in the art to provide different areas of a workstation having different desk heights, all stabilized together by a common structure. Thus, stability, compactness, footprints, accessibility, readiness, minimization of adaptation or adjustment, and the like would make such a workstation system more usable. Similarly, systems of framing and connection that permit various levels, all accessible to view, but not needing adjustment in transition, would minimize interruptions to a worker.

[0007] Thus, it would be an advance in the art to provide a workstation system that provides various stations having different desktops at different levels, all in close proximity. It would also be an advance in the art to provide shared work spaces in which certain dedicated desk space is available to the individuals, while a shared exercise work space provides physical activity on an exer-

cise device associated with a higher standing desk or exercise station desk. It would be an advance to provide other returns, deck spaces, storage spaces, shelving, cabinets, racks, and the like in close proximity and adaptable around the various workstations.

[0008] Viewed from a first aspect the present invention provides a method comprising:

providing a plurality of desktops integrally interdependent on a shared support structure for mechanical support above a supporting surface;

positioning a first user in a sitting position at a first desktop of the plurality of desktops during a first dedicated time;

positioning a second user in a sitting position at a second desktop of the plurality of desktops during a second dedicated time;

alternately positioning the first and second users, during respective first shared time and second shared time, at a third desktop, of the plurality of desktops, positioned to be accessible as a desk to at least one of the first and second users when in a standing position at a standing station proximate the supporting surface at a location spaced between the first and second desktops in a horizontal direction.

[0009] Preferably the method further comprises:

working by the first and second users simultaneously at the plurality of desktops.

[0010] Preferably the method further comprises:

positioning an exercise device on the supporting surface at the standing station.

[0011] Particularly preferably the method further comprises:

using, by the first and second users, respectively, during the respective first and second shared times, both the exercise device and the third desktop.

[0012] More preferably the method further comprises:

using, by the first and second users, respectively, the first and second desktops during the respective first and second dedicated times.

[0013] Preferably the method further comprises:

alternately adjusting a third height corresponding to the third desktop in accordance with the respective heights of the first and second users during the respective first and second shared times.

[0014] Preferably the method further comprises:

providing an exercise machine between the first and second desktops;
 working, by one of the first and second users, at the third desktop while exercising in cooperation with the exercise machine during a first shared time; and
 working, alternately, by the other of the first and second users, at the third desktop while exercising in cooperation with the exercise machine during a second shared time distinct from the first shared time.

[0015] Particularly preferably the method further comprises:

working by the first and second users at the first and second desktops, respectively, as dedicated desktops at first and second dedicated times, respectively, distinct from the first and second shared times, respectively.

[0016] Preferably the method further comprises:

fixing the first desktop at a first height selected according to a first preference of the first user; and
 fixing the second desktop at a second height selected according to a second preference of the second user.

[0017] Particularly preferably the method further comprises:

fixing the third desktop at a third height selected according to a third preference alternately corresponding to the first and second users during the first and second shared times, respectively.

[0018] Preferably the method further comprises:

providing modular desktops having a plurality of available widths and available lengths;

selecting, by one of the first and second users, an arbitrary desktop having a first width and a first length based on the preference of the one of the first and second users; and

installing a corresponding arbitrary desktop as one of the first and second desktops associated with the one of the first and second users.

[0019] Preferably the method further comprises:

positioning the first, second, and third desktops, interconnected by the supporting structure in cubical.

[0020] Preferably the method further comprises:

positioning the exercise device between the first and

second desktops absent any direct mechanical connection between the supporting structure and the exercise device.

5 **[0021]** Preferably the method further comprises:

providing a wing desktop, laterally spaced between the first desktop and the third desktop, and translated transversely to a position behind the first and second desktop, with respect to the first user.

[0022] Particularly preferably the method further comprises:

positioning the first and second desktops and the wing desktop to be sufficiently high to be visible and manually accessible to, and sufficiently low not to interfere with exercising by, the one of the first and second users when working at the third desktop.

[0023] Viewed from a further aspect the present invention provides a method comprising:

providing a plurality of desktops integrally interdependent on a shared support structure for mechanical support above a supporting surface;
 positioning a first user in a sitting position at a first desktop of the plurality of desktops;
 positioning a second user in a sitting position at a second desktop of the plurality of desktops, the first and second users and first and second desktops being positioned on opposite sides of a third desktop of the plurality of desktops, the third desktop being positioned to be accessible from a standing position;
 working by the first and second users at the third desktop as a shared desktop, shared in alternating first and second shares of time, respectively; and
 working by the first and second users at the first and second desktops, respectively, as dedicated desktops at first and second dedicated times, respectively, distinct from the first and second shares of time, respectively.

[0024] Preferably the method further comprises:

working simultaneously by the first and second users by a combination of accessing the first desktop, accessing the second desktop, accessing the third desktop, and exercising on an exercise device positioned proximate the third desktop and laterally between the first and second desktops.

[0025] Viewed from an even further aspect the present invention provides an apparatus configured as a system of structurally integrated, shared, work stations, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of desktops, each desktop thereof having

a working height corresponding thereto;
 a support structure interconnecting the plurality of desktops to provide mechanical support in vertical, lateral, and transverse directions, mutually orthogonal to one another, above a supporting surface;
 the plurality of desktops integrally connected to be interdependent with respect to one another and the support structure;
 the plurality of desktops further comprising a first desktop positioned at a first height corresponding to a sitting height of a first user, a second desktop positioned at a second height corresponding to a sitting height of a second user, and a third desktop positioned at a third height corresponding to the standing height of at least one of the first and second users and placed between the first and second desktops; the first and second desktops, each positioned to receive a user working thereat simultaneously; and the third desktop positioned to receive a user working thereat simultaneously while at least one of the first and second desktops is occupied.

[0026] Preferably the apparatus further comprises: an exercise device positioned proximate the third desktop to be simultaneously accessible and usable by a user working at the third desktop.

[0027] Particularly preferably the first and second desktops are configured to be at least one of adjustable, fixable, and fixed at a height corresponding to a seated user; the third desktop is adjustable to correspond to the height of any of a plurality of users; the first, second, and third desktops are positioned to be all occupied simultaneously; and the third desk and supporting structure are configured to receive an arbitrary exercise machine selectively chosen, removable, and positionable for use by a user working thereat.

[0028] In view of the foregoing, a system and method in accordance with the invention may provide an apparatus having various stations sized to receive a user at that station. Accordingly, each station may have associated therewith at least one desk or desk. Each desk will typically have an upper and lower surface, the upper surface being accessible for working. The upper surface will typically be substantially planar.

[0029] For example, the upper surface will typically be flat throughout, but may have interruptions in that uniform planar expanse for tools, equipment, accessories, holders, wells, and so forth. Thus, pencil holders, computer monitors, anchor points, supports, edges, consoles, control boxes, and so forth may be implemented on or adjacent to a top surface, thus providing localized areas that will not necessarily be exactly planar.

[0030] A planar surface will typically be level, horizontal in two dimensions. It may be tilted for visibility, easier access for drawing, or the like.

[0031] In certain embodiments, a double duty desk may provide for multiple desks for one individual, multiple desks for multiple persons, or the like. For example, a

standing-height desk (standing desk) may be adjustable, but need not be quickly adjustable. For example, a desk may simply use set screws to fix a telescoping leg at a particular height, thus adjusting a height for a desktop of a standing desk. An exercise device, such as a treadmill, exercise bike, or the like may be placed in close proximity to the standing desk in order for a user to occupy the exercise device while working at the desk.

[0032] In certain embodiments, a standing desk may have an adjacent sitting desk. For example, a user may step away from an exercise device and the associated work surface of a standing desk in order to sit down at a sitting desk where a computer, other papers, or other activities may be waiting. In certain embodiments, a user from the standing position, the seated position, or both may be able to view the standing desk, the sitting desk, a return, or any combination or subcombination thereof.

[0033] In certain embodiments, a sitting-height desk will typically be fixed, dedicated, not shared, and need not be readily adjustable. Notwithstanding adjustability may be a desirable parameter, such adjustability need not be frequent, nor even convenient. For example, many commercial desks are prefabricated at a standard height. Such standard heights are highly functional.

[0034] Meanwhile, a standing desk will typically be set at a height suitable for a user or a group of users. Thus, a standing desk may be set at a particular height. That height may be permanently fixed, may be adjustable with some inconvenience, or may be readily adjustable and conveniently so.

[0035] In other embodiments, height adjustments may be driven by cranks, rack-and-pinion drives, equilibrated (spring or counter-weight driven) supports, or the like. Nevertheless, such complexities need not be requirements in a system, inasmuch as a working height of any working surface is coincident with about the lower extent of the rib cage of a user. Whether sitting or standing, such a height is about at the same distance from a user's shoulder as is that same user's elbow. Thus, elbows can be rested on a desktop or withdrawn therefrom. Hands can easily access papers, books, keyboards, controls, and the like on the desktop.

[0036] In certain embodiments, the standing desktop may be comparatively easier to adjust. As a practical matter, the sitting-height desk will seldom need any adjustment. Initially, depending on the height of a user and convenience or preference, the sitting-height desk portion may be adjustable. Nevertheless, once adjusted, any dedicated desk need not be readjusted, inasmuch as it will not typically have a different user.

[0037] Similarly, returns or wing desks may be attached laterally beside the station where a user would typically sit. This permits a "wrap around" approach to flat working surfaces in order to support accessories, tools, papers, computers, monitors, personal effects, and so forth.

[0038] In certain embodiments of an apparatus and method in accordance with the invention, multiple work-

stations may be interconnected to be occupied simultaneously by a plurality of users. Simultaneously, workstations may be occupied by individuals who work closely, work in a team, or are in the same organization. Most users may not desire, or may not need, to spend more than a small (less than half) fraction of a work day on an exercise machine at a standing workstation.

[0039] Multiple sitting workstations or sitting-height desks may be provided with shared structural supports. Those shared structural supports may be shared with the standing desk therebetween. Thus, one or more users may use a standing desk, and two or more users may share a standing desk.

[0040] Typically, stability may be improved by providing rigidized, stabilized, braced structures extending horizontally and vertically and interconnected between the various work spaces. In this way, a larger bearing area, more bearing surface area, intermediate bracing, longer baseline or bearing length (horizontal extent between supports), and the like provide greater leverage and greater support. This provides better stability and stiffness to the structures underlying the various desk surfaces.

[0041] Gussets, angled braces, cross-members, underlying framing or frames, and so forth may be used. Similarly, vertical supports or legs may span vertical expanses between the floor or other supporting surface and a desktop. These vertical supports or legs may be telescoping to extend an extension portion from a base portion in order to adjust height.

[0042] A foot or feet may extend horizontally at a lower end of any leg in order to provide a longer bearing length, and thus more stability, less rocking, less susceptibility to tipping over, and generally greater stability for the vertical supports or legs. In certain embodiments, workstations may be ganged together with multiple work spaces with adjacent desks, alternating in a suitable fashion. For example, alternating with sitting-height desks may be standing-height desks.

[0043] Typically, the legs and feet of a standing-height desk (standing desk) may straddle an exercise device, such as a treadmill or exercise bicycle. Thus, the desk may have its own free-standing support, independent from the exercise device. In certain embodiments, a user may actually park a particular exercise device in the work space that will access a standing desk. Meanwhile, a user may swap out that exercise device, replacing it with a separate exercise device, and park various devices at various other workstations, or elsewhere.

[0044] Thus, a user has the option of standing at a standing desk, with no exercise equipment present, standing on a treadmill at a stationary, standing while walking on a treadmill, sitting or standing upright on a device, or sitting in some other position on an exercise bicycle, or the like. Thus, a user has a great range of motion, and many options by having free standing desks that may be used independently from any specific exercise device, while being usable with several different ex-

ercise device types.

[0045] Meanwhile, with quasi-fixed desk heights, an exercise system or a system of workstations that accommodates exercise equipment may actually face other devices (head-to-head, back to back, or in another arrangement such as at right angles) however desired. However, by a selective arrangement of sitting desks, returns, shelving, cabinets, and so forth, a workstation may be set facing, with its most forward edge against, or in close proximity to, a wall.

[0046] Likewise, an exercise system may be set laterally against a wall located on one side, the other, or both. For example, an apparatus and system in accordance with the invention may be implemented in a standard industrial cubicle of any suitable size or arrangement, with multiple walls nearby. Those walls may be sized and spaced to hold standardized cabinets, cubbies (open-faced cabinets), closed-door cabinets, racks, shelves, or the like.

[0047] In certain embodiments of an apparatus and method in accordance with the invention, those extended spaces outside the envelope of the standing desks and exercise machine may be arranged for convenient working by a user. Such arrangements may be selected by a user. Typical examples may be a set up that is effectively a private office. Another might be a shared office. Another situation may be a conference room or other meeting room.

[0048] Meanwhile a user may read, browse online, attend webinars, edit, monitor, handwrite, type, lecture, listen, answer phones, make calls, develop software, or the like from a standing desk, sitting desk, or combination thereof. Similarly, one may do all the foregoing tasks and many others while operating an exercise device at a standing desk, seated at a sitting desk, or a combination thereof, at will.

[0049] The foregoing features of the present invention will become more fully apparent from the following description and appended claims, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings. Understanding that these drawings depict only typical embodiments of the invention and are, therefore, not to be considered limiting of its scope, the invention will be described with additional specificity and detail through use of the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a workstation in accordance with the invention;

Figure 2 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of a workstation, this having only a single sitting desk in combination with a standing desk and exercise equipment;

Figure 3 is a perspective view of a combined, shared workstation arrangement having a single standing desk and two sitting desks flanking it;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment having two standing desks over exercise equipment, with an intervening return therebetween;

Figure 5 is a perspective view of one embodiment illustrating three standing desks with intervening return desks as the sitting-height desk, and illustrating an alternative exercise machine;

Figure 6 is a perspective view of one embodiment of a system in accordance with the invention set up in the space of an office cubicle;

Figure 7 is a right side perspective view of an alternative embodiment, corresponding to the system of Figure 6;

Figure 8 is a left side perspective view thereof;

Figure 9 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment thereof, including a return portion as a continuous part of the sitting desk thereof;

Figure 10 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment thereof, in which the return forms the entire sitting desk portion extending axially parallel to the exercise equipment;

Figure 11 is a perspective view of one alternative embodiment having two sitting desks flanking a standing desk over an exercise machine;

Figure 12 is a perspective view thereof, absent the flanking, sitting desks;

Figure 13 illustrates an alternative arrangement having three standing desks over exercise machines, with intermediate, short returns at sitting height between the standing desks;

Figure 14 is a perspective view of two banks of exercise machines of Figure 13, these arranged head-to-head;

Figure 15 is a top plan view thereof; and

Figure 16 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment, wherein two standing desks are arranged in opposite-facing, parallel directions.

[0050] It will be readily understood that the components of the present invention, as generally described and illustrated in the drawings herein, could be arranged and designed in a wide variety of different configurations. Thus, the following more detailed description of the embodiments of the system and method of the present invention, as represented in the drawings, is not intended to limit the scope of the invention, as claimed, but is merely representative of various embodiments of the invention. The illustrated embodiments of the invention will be best understood by reference to the drawings, wherein like parts are designated by like numerals throughout.

[0051] Referring to Figures 1 and 2, while referring to Figures 1 through 15 generally, a system 10 in accordance with the invention may be configured as an apparatus 10 operating as workstations for one or more users. For example, an exercise machine 12 may be selected from any suitable exercise equipment 12. In general, it is highly desirable to have an exercise device 12 that is simple to use, does not require a high degree of interaction or attention, and which provides a moderate, aerobic type of exercise.

[0052] In one embodiment of an apparatus 10 in ac-

cordance with the invention, a treadmill 12 or other type of exercise device 12 may be suitable. In the illustrated embodiment, supports 14 or legs 14 may have extensions 16 rendering the supports 14 telescopic or extendable in their vertical length. Similarly, a support 14 may be provided with feet 18 or a foot. This may provide a longer bearing length or bearing distance in order to stabilize the support 14 against tipping or falling over.

[0053] A desk 20 or workstation 20 may be supported at the top end (proximate end) of a support 14. Meanwhile, a foot 18 may be secured at the distal end of the same support 14. In certain embodiments, the extent of the desk 20 may be selected or calculated to be less than the maximum extent toward a user that the foot 18 extends. In this way, it is not possible to apply weight to the proximate edge of the desk 20 in a manner that would create a moment (as that term is used in engineering as a force at a distant) that would be outboard or beyond an end of the foot 18. Thus, the desk 20 will be fundamentally stable against tipping over in response to weight applied at any location by a user.

[0054] Each desk 20 may be formed to be flat, and thereby have a surface 21 or working surface 21 on the top face thereof. This surface 21 may be treated with a particular material, such as a laminate, a polymeric material, or other suitable material for a task to be accomplished by a user working at the desk 20. Each desk 20 may be configured or selected to be either a standing desk 22 or a sitting desk 23.

[0055] For example, in the illustrated embodiment, a standing desk 22 may be set at a fixed height. Nevertheless, the actual height that the telescoping extension 16 extends from the base portion of the member 14 may be selected by a user and fixed for that user for all time. On the other hand, adjustability, even motorized, cranked, or otherwise rapid response of adjustability by the extension 16 within the member 14 may be engineered into the system 10. In other embodiments, a simple lifting by a user of the desk 20 may result in extending by the extension 16 in order to lengthen the member 14 for suitable use.

[0056] In certain embodiments, the sitting desk 23 may be dedicated to a particular user. Meanwhile, the standing desk 22 may be configured to be used in a standing position, and more readily adjustable for shared use. It is a benefit specific to a system 10 in accordance with the invention that multiple persons may use adjacent work spaces 40 or stations 40 simultaneously.

[0057] For example, it may be that a team work area may be populated by a group of from two to half a dozen workers who are in close proximity. They may have some relationship by organization, task, or the like. In such an arrangement, several systems 10 may be installed to provide individual workstations 40a, 40c at sitting desks 23a, 23c with an intermediate, shared, standing desk 22.

[0058] In selected embodiments, a system 10 in accordance with the invention may include multiple sitting desks 23 mechanically secured by their structural fram-

ing, such as the supports 14, extensions 16, feet 18, and the like. In fact, it may be important to include a stabilizer 25 between adjacent and corresponding, supports 14 under a desk 20. For example, the stabilizer 25 connecting the supports 14 under the standing desk 22 may provide rigidization, dimensional stability, stiffness, and so forth.

[0059] Braces 27 such as diagonal braces 27 illustrated or gussets 27 as illustrated in various configurations in the illustrated embodiments, may rigidize by the principal of triangulation of distances, any vertical members 14 against horizontal members 25. Meanwhile, other framing 26 or frames 26 may extend below various surfaces, such as the desks 20, or a return 24 (wing desk 24) or wing table 24.

[0060] For example, an office desk may have a wing extension that pulls out much as a drawer, just above a set of drawers in the pedestal of such a desk. This provides an increase in work surface, and the ability to place items, papers, accessories, tools, or the like close at hand. In the illustrated embodiment, a wing table 24 or a return 24 may extend along the work space 40b of a standing user relying on the standing desk 22.

[0061] The positioning of the sitting desk 23 and the standing desk 22 may be very important. Likewise, the positioning of the return 24 or wing desk 24 may also be important. For example, in the illustrated embodiments, the user in a seated position will find that the top surface 21a of the sitting desk 23a is at about the same height as an elbow. Thus, it is accessible from a seated position, to hands, eyes (for viewing papers and other equipment's on the working surface 21a), and so forth. Meanwhile, the wing desk 24 or return 24 is also available, at the same height as illustrated.

[0062] While, while a user is at the standing desk 22, the top surface 21b is at about elbow height, or waist height, thus making objects on the top working surface 21b of the standing desk 22 available for viewing, touching, reaching by hand, and so forth. Meanwhile, the top surface 21b is also available for resting the elbows, forearms, or the like thereon.

[0063] One will note in the illustrated embodiments, however, that the top surfaces 21a, 21c, 21d, 21e are all available to a user standing at the standing desk 22, in the work space 40c. Thus, the actual usable work space in which a user may place objects, store objects, spread out papers and documents, arrange a computer monitor or keyboard, or other accessories, and the like are all available, accessible, and most can be reached.

[0064] It can be found that a major factor in productivity of workers is the available work space in which to spread out, view, reach, and otherwise access for fundamental utility the necessary tools, papers, documents, reading materials, reference material, computers, monitors, interfaces (keyboard, mouse, etc.) while working on a task.

[0065] Thus, in the illustrated embodiment, the height of the work surfaces 21a, 21c, 21d, 21e may be set to be accessible for viewing, reaching, or the like. Not only is this somewhat so when a user is in a seated position

thereat (at a workstation location 40a, 40c), but also is more effective when a user is standing, such as walking or exercising in the work space 40b at the standing desk 22).

[0066] A console 28 may be electrically connected to the exercise device 12. Convenience in working, without interruption, is a substantial benefit in a system 10 in accordance with the invention. Accordingly, the console 28 is preferably designed and shaped to not interfere with reach, vision, activity, or the like for a user working at the standing desk 22. Thus, the console 28 may be embedded in the standing desk 22, placed slightly beneath it near the proximal edge closest to a user, or the like.

[0067] Meanwhile, relief 30 may be provided in the standing desk 22 in order to provide more ready access to items, without interference by the central portion of the standing desk 22 with a user. For example, to a certain extent, the standing desk 22 may "wrap around" a user in order to maintain a certain radial distance more-or-less constant between a user, and the closest edge of the standing desk 22.

[0068] To the end of comfort, safety, convenience, and the like, a bumper 31 may be configured as a pad 31, a wrist support 31, a combination 31 thereof, or the like. Typically, the bumper 31 may be formed of a foamed, elastomeric polymer, such as a urethane foam, a polyethylene foam, or other expanded polymeric material. Thus, a wrist rest 31 as well as a protection 31 against an edge of the standing desk 22 may be provided.

[0069] The exercise machine 12 may be selected from a variety of devices. For example, a treadmill 12, an exercise bike 12, a recumbent exerciser, a stepper, an elliptical walker, or the like may be involved. However, in selecting an exercise device 12, it may best serve the needs of a worker to provide a minimum of distraction, and thus a minimum level of attention required by the exercise device 12.

[0070] The exercise device 12 may be swapped in and out of the work space 40b and connected to the console 28 in a convenient place and manner. On the other hand, the exercise device 12 may be a particular type and may remain unchanged. Nevertheless, the exercise device 12 in the illustrated embodiment is completely disconnected mechanically from any support, and most registration or alignment requirements with the structure of the desks 20.

[0071] The cowling 32 over the motor 34 of the treadmill 12 illustrated does not interfere with the walking of a user on the treadmill 12. It need not impinge on any aspect of accessing the standing desk 22, the sitting desks 23a, 23c, nor the wing desks 24 or returns 24.

[0072] By way of explanation, a trailing letter used herein in combination with a reference numeral represents a specific instance of the item identified by the reference numeral. The reference numeral may be used to refer any or all of the items corresponding to that reference numeral. Thus, it is not necessary to use or describe every lettered item, nor is it inconsistent to refer to an

item identified by a reference numeral and trailing letter simply by the reference numeral. The reference numeral may refer to all of the instances, and may be thought of as the general reference for the general item type. Nevertheless, in distinguishing positions, specific items, and their relationships, it is sometimes convenient and more clear to a reader if the trailing letters are used to identify a specific instance discussed.

[0073] In general, the structure of the exercise 12, such as the treadmill 12 here, will typically involve guards 35 isolating certain equipment from a user. This increases safety, and relieves the user of having to pay particular undue attention to certain aspects of the structure. Particularly, a frame 36 may be protected by guards 35 thereabove. Similarly, feet 37 may space or adjust the frame 36 with respect to a supporting surface, such as a floor.

[0074] In the illustrated embodiment, a continuous belt 38 or endless belt 38 operates as the treadmill track 38 or belt 38 on which a user walks. By movement, the belt 38 advances, thus causing a user to be required to advance along the belt 38, in order to stay stationary with respect to the desks 20. A user may occupy any of the individual workstations 40 or positions 40.

[0075] As a practical matter, several users may have dedicated sitting desks 23, and share a single standing desk 22. Thus, the cost of maintaining and capitalizing the exercise device 12 is spread over more users. The more conventional functionality served by desks 20 may still be delivered to individual users.

[0076] For example, in most environments, a user will spend less than a full day walking on the treadmill 12. On the other hand, much of the day may be spent at a sitting desk 23. Accordingly, an individual user may share time with another user, inasmuch as each has a dedicated sitting desk 23. The time available for accessing the standing desk 22 may be subdivided among multiple users.

[0077] A "power user" may be able to operate at a desk 22 (standing desk 22) all day long, while standing, walking, jogging, running, or a combination thereof on the treadmill 12. However, as a practical matter, most users will spend only two hours or less per day actually exercising at a modest walking rate on the exercise device 12. Thus, the available time may typically be subdivided or "multiplexed" appropriately as agreed between users.

[0078] One may note that the embodiment of Figure 1 includes two separate sitting desks 23a, 23c and an intermediate, shared, standing desk 22. Nevertheless, in the embodiment of Figure 2, a single standing desk 22 is associated with a single sitting desk 23. The latter embodiment is serviceable, even though the standing desk 22 is not shared.

[0079] In general, the standing desk 22 may be mechanically secured to a structure, such as the various supports 14 or legs 14, interconnected by framing 26 supporting the desks 22, 23, 24 and also securing them to the supports 14 of the system 10. By means of the framing 26 or frames 26, additional stiffness (e.g. section

modulus) without additional thickness of the desktop material may be imparted to any desk 20, whether the standing desk 22, the sitting desk 23, or a wing desk 24.

[0080] On the other hand, such frames 26 may also secure the supports 14, and be stabilized by braces 27 or gussets 27 that triangulate distances to add substantial stability. Likewise, this minimizes the space, weight, expense, and interference associated with the supports 14 and other frames 26. In these embodiments, a user may move freely within the work space 40a, 40b, or 40c, without interference from unused desks 22, 23, 24 or desk portion 22, 23, 24, nor intermediate structures. Thus, one notices that clearance for and aft from a user position is substantial. Meanwhile, the lateral clearance (from side to side) is likewise suitable for either standing, sitting, or a combination, as desired.

[0081] Referring to Figures 3 through 5, while continuing to refer generally to Figures 1 through 15, in certain embodiments a user may select a chair 50 of arbitrary, desirable configuration. For example, some workers prefer an arm chair. Others do not. Thus, different types of chairs 50 may be selected according to user preference. Similarly, the specific height at which an individual sitting desk 23 is set may be unique, and selected for an individual. That individual, having a dedicated sitting desk 23, may then set up the height 19 (e.g. 19a, 19b) of that desk 23 according to user preference.

[0082] In certain embodiments, a user may set the wing desk 24 at the same height 19a as the sitting desk 23. In other embodiments, the wing desk 24 may be at yet another height 19. Typically, the wing desk 24, the sitting desk 23, and any materials thereon may be visible, and may be manually accessible by reaching, for a user standing at the standing desk 22. Meanwhile, certain objects, monitors, and the like that may be set on the standing desk 22 may be visible or reachable from the seated position at a sitting desk 23.

[0083] As a practical matter, it is most important or at least comparatively more important, that a user operating at a standing desk 22 be able to see materials, papers, documents, accessories, computers, screens, and the like resting on a sitting desk 23. For example, a user at a standing desk 22 may still want access to materials at the dedicated sitting desk 23. It is unlikely or less likely that a seated user operating at a sitting desk 23 will need access to materials on top of the standing desk 22. The operational concept is somewhat contrary to dedicated use of the standing desk 22. Nevertheless, in the embodiment of Figure 2, the standing desk 22 is associated with a single sitting desk 23.

[0084] A user may position a system 10 on a floor 51, in order to support a system 10 of desks 20. A user may then configure personal space on a dedicated sitting desk 23 with personally dedicated equipment. For example, a computer 52, a monitor 54, a keyboard 56, a mouse 57, and the like may typically be associated with a single user.

[0085] In some embodiments, a monitor 54 may be set

on the standing desk 22. Such a monitor 54 may be available to multiple users by reconnection or switching a connection. On the other hand, a monitor 54 may be set on a sitting desk 23 when appropriate, and on the standing desk 22 for reference. Nevertheless, in the illustrated embodiments, a user may see quite clearly a monitor 54 sitting on a sitting desk 23 even when a user is standing and operating at a standing desk 22.

[0086] Typically, phones 58, papers 59, and the like may be moved about by a user. Thus, a user may place a phone 58 at any location being used as part of a work space 40. Thus, a phone 58 may be moved to the standing desk 22, and removed back to a sitting desk 23 at will. Similarly, papers 59 may be placed on any desk 20, and may be moved from a sitting desk 23 to a standing desk 22 at different times. In general, the system 10 in accordance with the invention may provide user selection arbitrarily and user configuration arbitrarily in order to optimize personal preferences for workstation efficiency, access, organization, and so forth.

[0087] Typically, an office will have walls 60, 61. A user at a sitting desk 23 may face a wall 60, such as a forward wall 60. Meanwhile, a lateral wall 61 may be nearby or distant. In the embodiments illustrated, a lateral wall 61 is adjacent a sitting desk 23a, and may support shelves, cabinets, accessories, and the like. Similarly, a frontal wall 60 or front wall 60 may be faced by a user. It 60 may also be engaged to support shelves, brackets, accessories, storage, cubbies (cubby-hole-type, open shelving) or the like. Similarly, cabinets, files, other organization units or the like may also be secured to a wall 60, 61 as desirable.

[0088] A user may distribute accessories in a manner most conducive to the task at hand. In general, a user will have the liberty to arrange the personal work space in accordance with personal desires. Meanwhile, the shared work space, such as that associated with the standing desk 22 may be set as agreed upon in order to be shared. Alternatively, it may be readily adjustable to be manipulated by each user timely and comparatively quickly when in use by that particular user.

[0089] Typically, a laptop 62 may be used remotely or may be docked or otherwise used at a desk 20. Typically, a user may have a phone 64, a smartphone 64, a personal digital assistant 64, or the like. Other accessories 66 may be placed on the desk 20, attached to a wall 60, 61, or the like. Thus, great latitude, great individual freedom for dedicated spaces, is compatible with shared use, thus minimizing cost, maximizing utility, and maximizing user productivity by expanding the available work space.

[0090] A safety tether 68 associated with an exercise machine 12 may be connected to the system 10. For example, to prevent tripping, stumbling, injury, or the like, a user moving away from the standing desk 22 may automatically pull on a safety tether 68, thus causing immediate stoppage of all automatic or motorized mechanical activity of the exercise machine 12. Thus, a system 10 in accordance with the invention need not dispense

with the safety equipment available with exercise machines 12 in general.

[0091] Similarly, the desks 20 replace to a large extent, and may replace totally, the handles, bars, boundaries, and other registration devices suitable for gripping by a user in order to provide stability, gaging of distance, setting of pace on a treadmill 12, and so forth. A user has the visual registration ability due to the positioning and non-moving nature of each of the desks 20. Thus, by viewing the standing desk 22, sitting desk 23, wing desk 24, or return 24, a user has a mental picture just as in driving a car down the road. A user does not have to pay attention to every detail. Peripheral vision gives a sense and sensation of surrounding objects, their distance, and whether they are moving in relationship to a user. Thus, the desks 20 provide visual registration by a user even when viewed only in peripheral sight.

[0092] Thus, the safety tether 68 may protect against the inability of a user to reach the console 28, and shut off the exercise device 12. However, the continued use of handles need not be undertaken as the desks, with their supports 14 and framing 26, provide suitable structure, strength, support, access, size, and gripping ability for a user.

[0093] Referring to Figure 3 specifically, the walls 60, 61, laptop 62, phone 64 or PDA 64, other accessories 66, and safety tether 68 are included. Meanwhile, a phone 58 of conventional type also sits along with other accessories, such as beverage containers, and the like.

[0094] Notably, an adjuster 70 may be configured as a crank 70, a set screw 70, or the like. Accordingly, by suitable sizing and weighting of the standing desk 22, a user may readily lift the desk 22 by extending the extensions 16 from the supports 14 or the base portions of the supports 14 in order to adjust the height of the standing desk 22.

[0095] Similarly, adjustments (not shown) may be provided in order to tilt the standing desk 22. For example, in dealing with papers, it may be preferable or desirable by a user to rely upon the bumper 31 or the edge treatment 31 to resist papers sliding off the standing desk 22, while the standing desk 22 is tilted with respect to the supports 14, in order to provide a better angle of visibility for items on the surface 21 of the standing desk 22.

[0096] Thus, adjusters 70 may be included at the attachment location between the extension 16 and the desktop of the standing desk 22 in order to tilt the standing desk 22. However, the most basic adjustment is the adjustment of height, such as by a set screw 70 that will secure the base of the support 14 and the extension 16 against relative movement thereof. As a practical matter, the adjustment 70 may be a set screw 70 that includes a knob easily turned to apply a force binding the extension 16 in place. In this way, adjustment is readily available, but not automatic, powered, or the like.

[0097] For most people, a standing desk 22 may best be set at a particular height. Personal preference may be particularly sensitive to a matter of a height difference.

However, sitting desks 23 are typically set at a fixed height 19 of from about twenty eight to about thirty two inches. Typically, a thirty inch desk height 19 is quite common. Thus, in some embodiments, the supports 14 under the sitting desks 23 may not even have any adjustability. They may simply be fixed at a standard desk height 19. Nevertheless, in certain embodiments, the supports 14 may be adjustable under the sitting desks 23 in order to be tailored in their configuration to the exact preferences of an individual user.

[0098] Referring to Figure 4, the return 24 may be incorporated even in the absence of a sitting desk 23. It has been found that users will frequently need or desire a place to set necessary-but-not-currently-used items. Drinks, reference materials, objects, telephones, and the like may be set on a return 24 that is shared between multiple standing desks 22, even in the absence of dedicated sitting desks 23.

[0099] In the illustrated embodiment, a pair of standing desks 22 is arranged with a shared return 24 therebetween. Each standing desk 22 has its own exercise device 12. In this embodiment, a user or a pair of users may have at hand and readily available, any item desired to be set on the return 24, not necessary at hand on the standing desk 22. Nevertheless, a user may move papers from the standing desk 22 to the return 24 for storage or for safekeeping momentarily while other documents are placed in use on the working surface 21 of the standing desk 22. Thus, a variety of configurations may be used. In other embodiments, the system 10 of Figure 4 may be configured with additional sitting desks 23 outboard of the standing desks 22. Thus, in such an embodiment, a user may have multiple returns 24.

[0100] Referring to Figure 5, a particular embodiment of a system 10 in accordance with the invention is set up in a room having walls 60, 61 defining several work spaces 40. In the illustrated embodiment, the standing desks 22 are set up similarly to those of Figure 4 with a return 24 between each adjacent set of standing desks 22. As illustrated, a single exercise machine is associated with one location 40. The other workstation locations 40 may also have exercise machines 12 installed thereat, but need not. Thus, one may work from a standing position, with or without additional motion imposed by or supported by an exercise machine 12.

[0101] In this instance, each of the standing desks 22 faces a wall 60. A single workstation 40 or standing desk 22 is flanked also by the lateral wall 61. Typically, in such an embodiment, the returns 24 are not considered sitting desks 23. The spacing is inadequate to support seating. Moreover, the length or extent of each of the returns 24 is substantial, even more so than illustrated in Figure 4. Thus, considerable space exists on a work top 21 or surface 21 of the return 24 in order to set objects, distribute papers, or otherwise arrange work space. In the illustrated embodiment, each standing desk 22 appears to be dedicated, while the returns 24 are shared.

[0102] Referring to Figure 6, while continuing to refer

generally to Figures 1 through 15, a series of cubicles 86 will typically be arranged in "high-density" office space. An individual cubicle 86 or work area 86 may be furnished for one individual, multiple individuals, a group, a team, or the like. Accordingly, the specific dimensions of the cubicle 86 may be configured in accordance with the number of persons being served by that work space 86.

[0103] By the same token, cubicles 86 may have walls 60 of various heights. In some working environments, walls 60 may traverse the entire distance from floor to ceiling of the enclosing room. In other embodiments, the height of the walls 60 or the partitions 60 around a cubicle 86 may extend about six feet overhead for most people. In other embodiments, the height is lower in order than individuals may converse with one another. Thus, the appropriateness of the work involved, the need for visibility, the need for oral communications or privacy, and the like may factor into the selection of the size or wall height for a cubicle 86.

[0104] In the illustrated embodiment, the system 10 may be set up with a standing desk 22 adjacent a sitting desk 23. Meanwhile, an exercise device 12, in this instance, a treadmill 12, is positioned directly on the floor between the supports 14 of the standing desk 22. A panel 80 provides additional positions for certain information, such as may be displayed on a monitor 82 or a screen 82. Meanwhile, the console 28 controlling the exercise device 12 may still be mounted near an edge of the standing desk 22.

[0105] By contrast, a monitor 82 may be mounted above the working surface 21 of the standing desk 22 or may be positioned therebelow. In the illustrated embodiment, the monitor 82 may be visible to a user just as may the standing desk 22. Thus, inasmuch as the space near the desk 22 and distant from the exercise device 12 will not interfere with walking movements, the panel 80 may be positioned to be visibly accessible to a user standing (e.g. exercising) at the standing desk 22.

[0106] Accessories 84 may include, for example, a shelf 84 or rack 84 mounted to a desk 22, 23, a support 14, or the like. Similarly, racks 84, shelves 84, and the like may also be secured to the walls 60 of the cubicle 86. In the illustrated embodiment, a lateral wall 61b opposite a lateral wall 61a may flank the system 10. These walls 61a, 61b may provide additional space for holding brackets, shelves, cabinets, and the like. Similarly, the desks 22, 23 may be positioned very close to or touching the forward wall 60.

[0107] In alternative embodiments, the system 10 may be spaced away from the wall 60 in order to provide space for projecting accessories such as shelving, cabinets, and so forth that will be available to a user, above one or more of the desks 22, 23. In other embodiments, shelves, cabinets, or the like may be secured to the front wall 60, the lateral walls 61a, 61b, or both, yet spaced sufficiently from any desk 22, 23 so as not to interfere. For example, the sitting desk 23 may be positioned immediately adjacent the front wall 60. It may have a cabinet

anchored to the top edge or near the top edge of the front wall 60 in such a way as not to interfere. A user may still have lighting, access, visibility, and the like while working at the sitting desk 23. Likewise, lighting may be provided under such a cabinet in order to illuminate the top surface 21 of the sitting desk 23. In certain embodiments, shelving, cabinets, and the like may also be configured to maximize user visibility of a desk 20, 22, 23 from a position while using the standing desk 22, sitting desk 23, or both.

[0108] Referring to Figures 7 through 12, while continuing to refer generally to Figures 1 through 15, various configurations of a system 10 may optimize working space according to the desires of a particular user. For example, the sitting desk 23 of Figure 7 is comparatively as long or as wide, from a user perspective, as the standing desk 22. Thus, the sitting work space 40a is more spacious than the standing work space 40b. However, a shelf 84 is provided, which will preclude a user sitting close to the distal or far end of the sitting desk 23. Meanwhile, relief may be provided in the sitting desk 23 in order to provide more firm and close attachment of framing 26, associated with the sitting desk 23, with the support 14 under the standing desk 22.

[0109] Similarly, the return portion 24 of Figure 9 may replace, or augment the presence of a separate return 24, generally. In the embodiment of Figure 9, the sitting desk 23 actually includes a return portion 24 all as part of the uninterrupted (continuous) working surface 21 thereof.

[0110] Likewise, in the embodiment of Figure 10, the sitting desk 23 may actually be positioned as a return 24. That is, the user standing in a work space 40b at the standing desk 22 may have access to the entire length of the work surface 21 associated with the sitting desk 23. Thus, the sitting desk 23 may be approached from a side opposite the exercise device 12 (e.g. treadmill 12) from the standing desk 22. Meanwhile, the entire length of the sitting desk 23 is still available for viewing of objects, papers, accessories, screens, computers, and the like. It is reachable by hand to retrieve any object placed thereon. Thus, the system 10 more thoroughly wraps around a standing user.

[0111] The only additional inconvenience thereof is the fact that a user, to move from the standing work space 40b to the seated work space 40a, would need to pass around the end of the sitting desk 23 in order to have access thereto from a seated position. Nevertheless, the available space required is optimized in that the distance between a user seated at the sitting desk 23 across that sitting desk 23 to the support 14 is comparatively less than the similar measurement for the embodiments of Figures 7, 8, and 9. Thus, less lateral distance is required. Chairs 50, auxiliary supports 14 and the like have been omitted from Figure 10, but are positioned as appropriate as described hereinabove.

[0112] Referring to Figure 11, a sitting desk 23, in fact two of them 23, may reflect the aspect ratio (ratio of two dimensions, in this case length to width) of each of the

sitting desks 23. Each is the same as that of the sitting desk 23 of Figure 10. However, in this embodiment, the sitting desks 23 extend a greater distance away from the exercise device 12 as embodied in the treadmill 12. Thus, the work spaces 40a, 40c of Figure 11 are considerably wider, from a seated user's point of view, along a frontal wall 60. Thus, the overall footprint of the system 10 of Figure 10 is comparatively narrower, measured crossways of (e.g. orthogonally, at right angles to) the moving direction of the treadmill 12.

[0113] Referring to Figure 12, a standing desk 22 may be used standing alone over an exercise device 12, if desired. Thus, at a minimum, a system 10 may include a non-mechanically-connected treadmill 12 or other exercise device 12 positioned within the supports 14. It may be literally completely unconnected except by the supporting floor surface. Thus, registration fittings, anchors, fasteners, registration stations, connectors, adapters, and the like may fix a treadmill 12 or other exercise device 12 with respect to the supports 14 or the exercise standing desk 22. However, they may be completely unnecessary. This provides for more ready access, simpler set up, and adjustment of the relative position of the exercise 12 by an individual user. Thus, by eschewing the forced registration of fixing the exercise device 12 in a bracket or cradle integral to the supports 14 of the standing desk 22, one may provide additional adjustability, arbitrary positioning, and so forth for user convenience, comfort, and personal preference.

[0114] Referring to Figures 13 through 16, a system 10 may include a group or bank of standing desks 22 in comparatively close quarters. In the illustrated embodiment of Figure 13, a return 24 that does not extend backward along the extent of the treadmills 12 and away from the standing desks 22 may replace any sitting desk 23. However, such a configuration limits the usefulness of such a bank of standing desks 22 as far as personal, seated use. That is, in the embodiment of Figure 13, seated use is basically not available. Space is not available.

[0115] On the other hand, certain spaces may be configured as illustrated in Figures 14 and 15. In this embodiment, banks are arranged in ranks, columns, or rows. Here, two rows (banks 90) of standing tables 22 are arranged head-to-head. Accordingly, such a work space is comparatively less useful, maybe even approximating useless, for seated work.

[0116] However, in certain embodiments, a general office space may provide individual desks for users, and make the standing desks 22 only available by moving to a different space where such standing desks 22 are ganged, or grouped. This may be a suitable arrangement for situations where the heat generated by perspiration of users, and the operation of motors 34 within the cowlings 32 of the treadmills 12 may be carried away. This may occur by maintaining a lower room temperature, such as about 60 to about 65 degrees, rather than the more common 68 to about 72 degrees at which comfort heating is provided. Thus, a centralized room containing

banks 90 of standing desks 22 may be maintained at a suitable temperature different from that of comfort heating in a general common, sedentary, work space.

[0117] In the illustrated embodiments, many benefits accrue to users and owners of systems 10 in accordance with the invention. In the illustrated embodiment, the system is modular in that individual systems 10 may be expanded by the addition of a number of sitting desks 23, various combinations of standing desks 22, arrangements, orientations, attachments, angular intersections of the central axis of such devices 20, and so forth.

[0118] Similarly, the standing desk 22 and sitting desk 23 may be secured together to minimize the amount of hardware required while still obtaining the maximum bearing length (the distance between adjacent or distant supports for an object). Thus, for example, a support 14 under a sitting desk 23 tends to support and stabilize the connecting support 14 of a standing desk 22 positioned adjacent thereto. Numerous embodiments showing this principal are included in the Figures 1 through 15. Moreover, fewer legs 14 or supports 14 are required, thus providing more open spaces, and clear space for positioning chairs 50, feet and legs of a user, and so forth.

[0119] One may see that a system 10 provides for multiple heights 19 of desks 20. For example, a sitting desk 23 may have a height 19a selected by a user for seated work. Meanwhile, a standing desk 22 may have a height 19b suitable for standing. Meanwhile, returns 24 may have different heights 19, or the same height as either a sitting desk 23, standing desk 22, or the like.

[0120] In accordance with the invention, a shared standing desk 22 allows for a shared exercise device 12 in the work space 40 associated with different workstation system 10 available to users. The wing tables 24 or returns 24 may actually be replaced by sitting desks 23 oriented perpendicularly to the orientation to the standing desks 22. Thus, footprint may be modularized, and may be highly adjustable between a more rectangular total footprint of a system 10 versus a more spread out footprint of the system 10.

[0121] Meanwhile, the feet 18 associated with supports 14 below desks 20 may typically be secured such that at least one thereof extends outward farther than the edge of the corresponding desk 20. In this way, support against tipping over is available to a user. Meanwhile, this permits much more flexibility in selecting and positioning an exercise device 12 under a standing desk 22. It also provides safety, an effective railing or handle, and so forth.

[0122] The system 10 may define forward and rearward directions with respect to a user on the exercise machine 12 while working at a standing desk 22 (e.g., standing desktop 22). A lateral direction is horizontally to the right or left, with respect to a user. A transverse direction may be either of the forward or rearward directions. An axial direction may be along any axis, such as a centerline of an object or person. Vertical is upward or downward with respect to a user and any supporting sur-

face such as a floor.

Claims

1. A method comprising:

providing a plurality of desktops integrally interdependent on a shared support structure for mechanical support above a supporting surface; positioning a first user in a sitting position at a first desktop of the plurality of desktops during a first dedicated time; positioning a second user in a sitting position at a second desktop of the plurality of desktops during a second dedicated time; and alternately positioning the first and second users, during respective first shared time and second shared time, at a third desktop, of the plurality of desktops, positioned to be accessible as a desk to at least one of the first and second users when in a standing position at a standing station proximate the supporting surface at a location spaced between the first and second desktops in a horizontal direction.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising:

positioning an exercise device on the supporting surface at the standing station.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising:

alternately adjusting a third height corresponding to the third desktop in accordance with the respective heights of the first and second users during the respective first and second shared times.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1 further comprising:

providing an exercise machine between the first and second desktops; working, by one of the first and second users, at the third desktop while exercising in cooperation with the exercise machine during a first shared time; and working, alternately, by the other of the first and second users, at the third desktop while exercising in cooperation with the exercise machine during a second shared time distinct from the first shared time.

5. A method as claimed in claim 4 further comprising:

working by the first and second users at the first and second desktops, respectively, as dedicated desktops at first and second dedicated times,

respectively, distinct from the first and second shared times, respectively.

6. A method as claimed in any preceding claim further comprising:

fixing the first desktop at a first height selected according to a first preference of the first user; and
fixing the second desktop at a second height selected according to a second preference of the second user.

7. A method as claimed in claim 6 further comprising:

fixing the third desktop at a third height selected according to a third preference alternatingly corresponding to the first and second users during the first and second shared times, respectively.

8. A method as claimed in any preceding claim further comprising:

providing modular desktops having a plurality of available widths and available lengths;
selecting, by one of the first and second users, an arbitrary desktop having a first width and a first length based on the preference of the one of the first and second users; and
installing a corresponding arbitrary desktop as one of the first and second desktops associated with the one of the first and second users.

9. A method as claimed in any preceding claim further comprising:

positioning the first, second, and third desktops, interconnected by the supporting structure in cubical.

10. A method as claimed in any of claimc 1 to 8, further comprising:

positioning the exercise device between the first and second desktops absent any direct mechanical connection between the supporting structure and the exercise device.

11. A method as claimed in any preceding claim, further comprising:

providing a wing desktop, laterally spaced between the first desktop and the third desktop, and translated transversely to a position behind the first and second desktop, with respect to the first user.

12. A method as claimed in claim 11, further comprising:

positioning the first and second desktops and the wing desktop to be sufficiently high to be visible and manually accessible to, and sufficiently low not to interfere with exercising by, the one of the first and second users when working at the third desktop.

13. An apparatus configured as a system of structurally integrated, shared, work stations, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of desktops, each desktop thereof having a working height corresponding thereto; a support structure interconnecting the plurality of desktops to provide mechanical support in vertical, lateral, and transverse directions, mutually orthogonal to one another, above a supporting surface;
the plurality of desktops integrally connected to be interdependent with respect to one another and the support structure;
the plurality of desktops further comprising a first desktop positioned at a first height corresponding to a sitting height of a first user, a second desktop positioned at a second height corresponding to a sitting height of a second user, and a third desktop positioned at a third height corresponding to the standing height of at least one of the first and second users and placed between the first and second desktops; and
the first and second desktops, each positioned to receive a user working thereat simultaneously; and
the third desktop positioned to receive a user working thereat simultaneously while at least one of the first and second desktops is occupied.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising an exercise device positioned proximate the third desktop to be simultaneously accessible and usable by a user working at the third desktop.

15. The apparatus of claim 14, wherein:

the first and second desktops are configured to be at least one of adjustable, fixable, and fixed at a height corresponding to a seated user; the third desktop is adjustable to correspond to the height of any of a plurality of users; the first, second, and third desktops are positioned to be all occupied simultaneously; and the third desk and supporting structure are configured to receive an arbitrary exercise machine selectively chosen, removable, and positionable for use by a user working thereat.

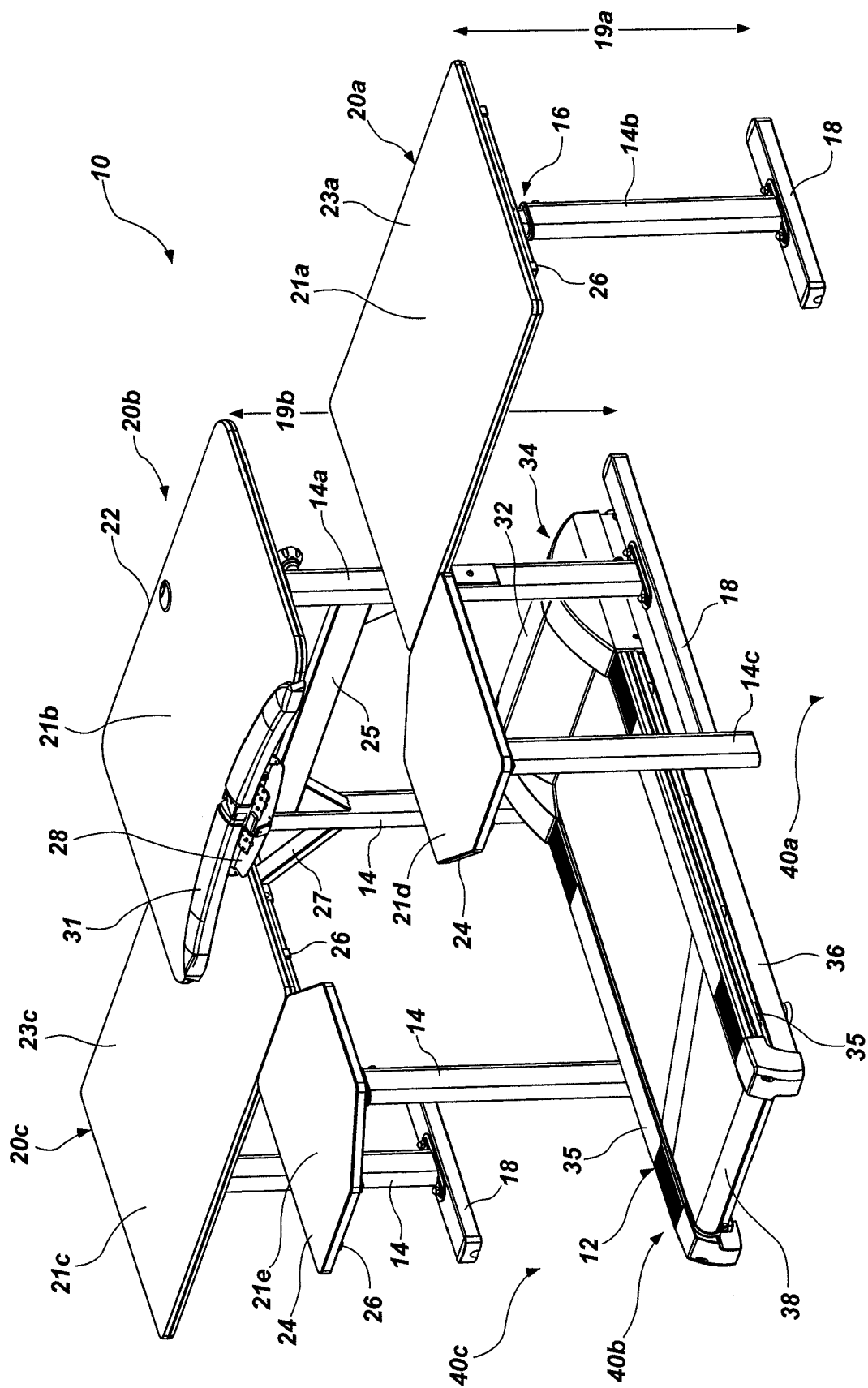


FIG. 1

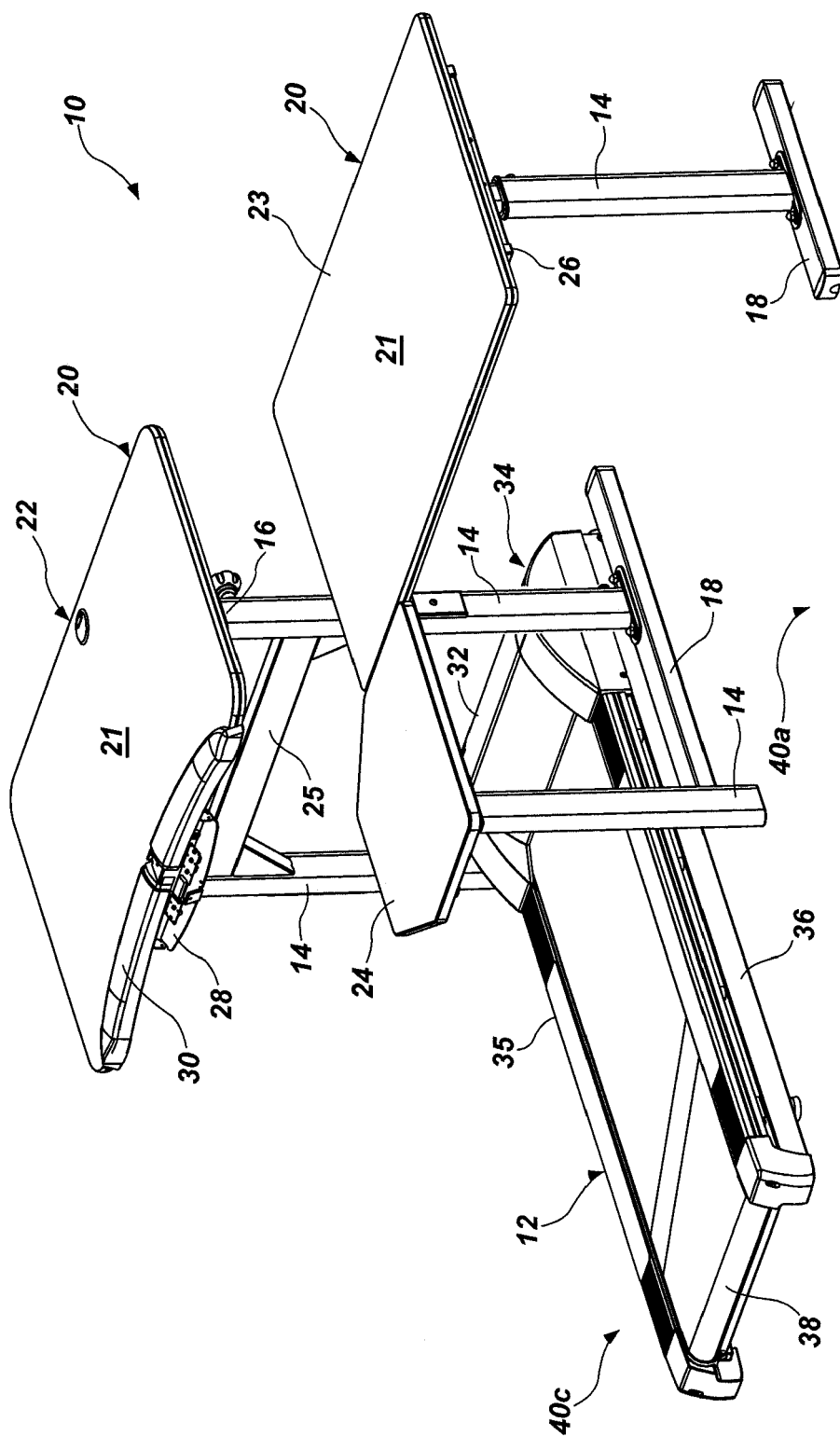


FIG. 2

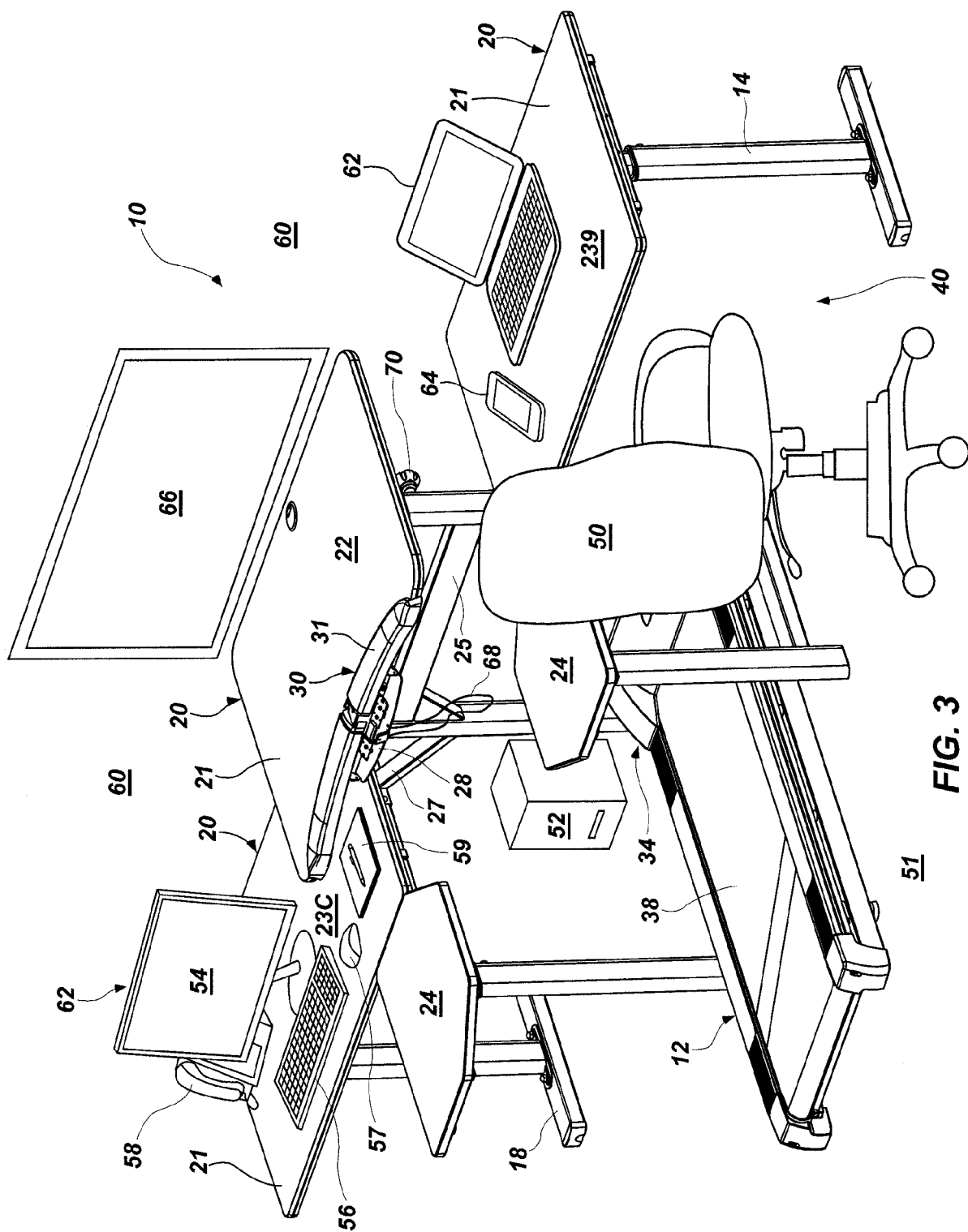


FIG. 3

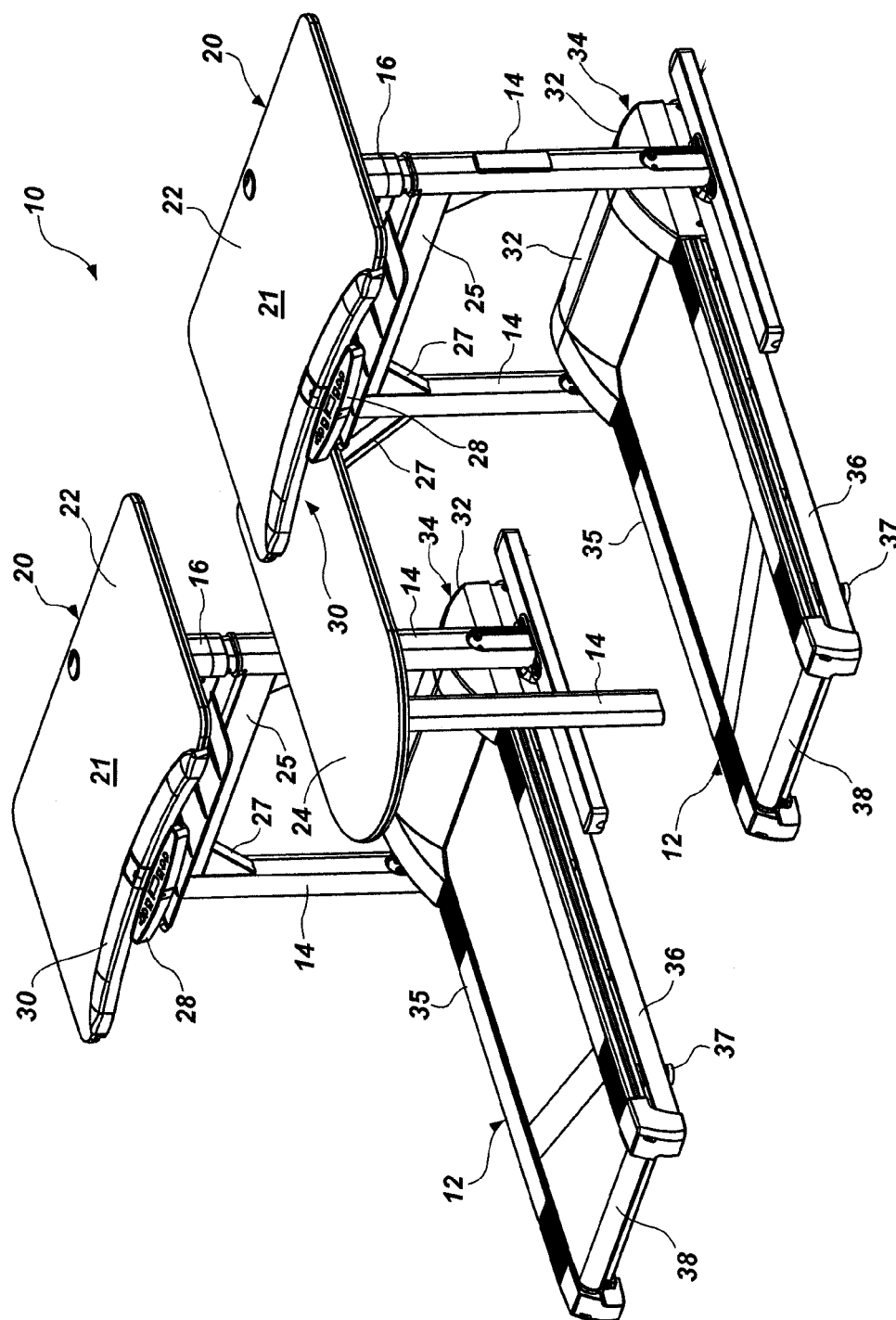


FIG. 4

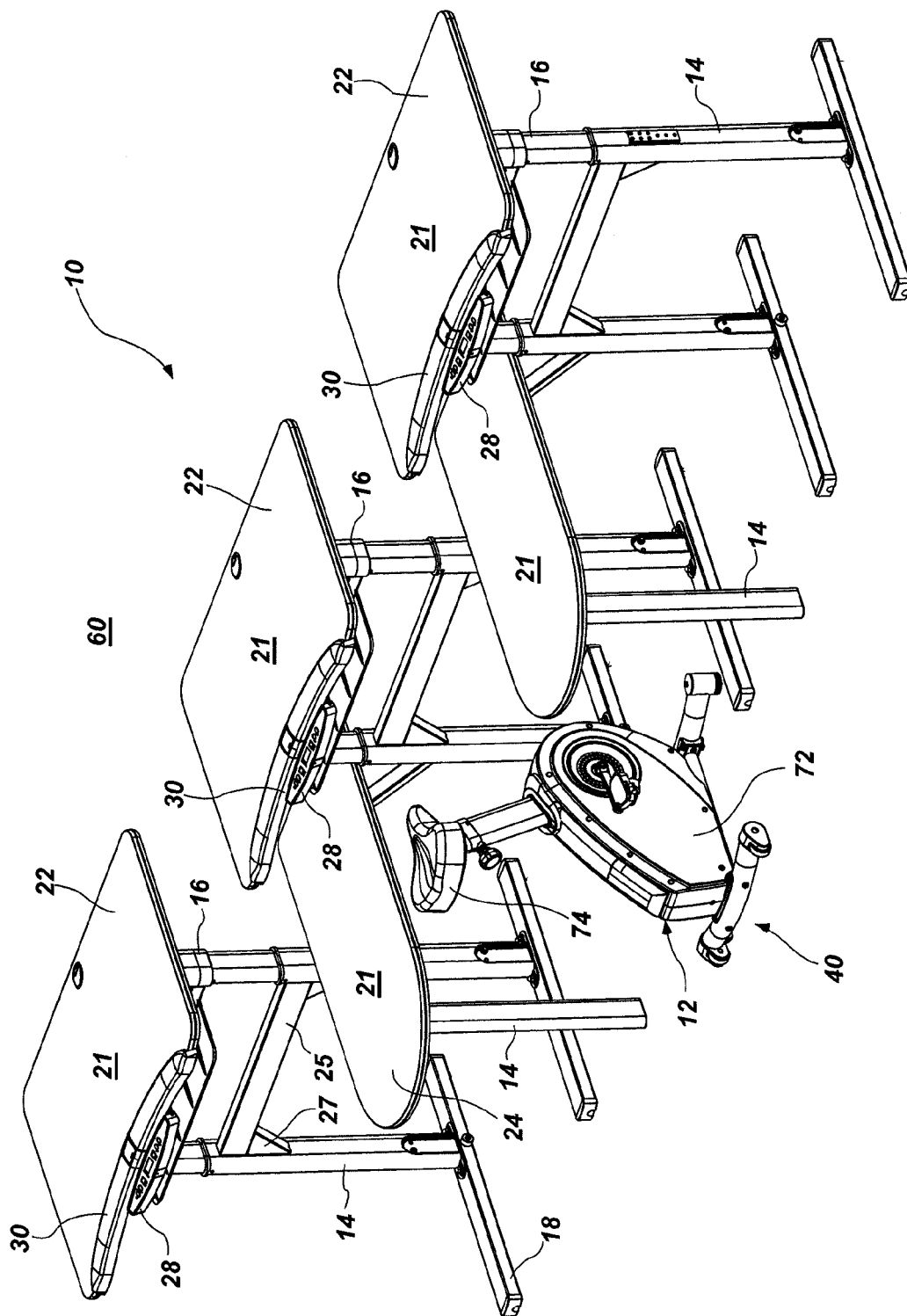
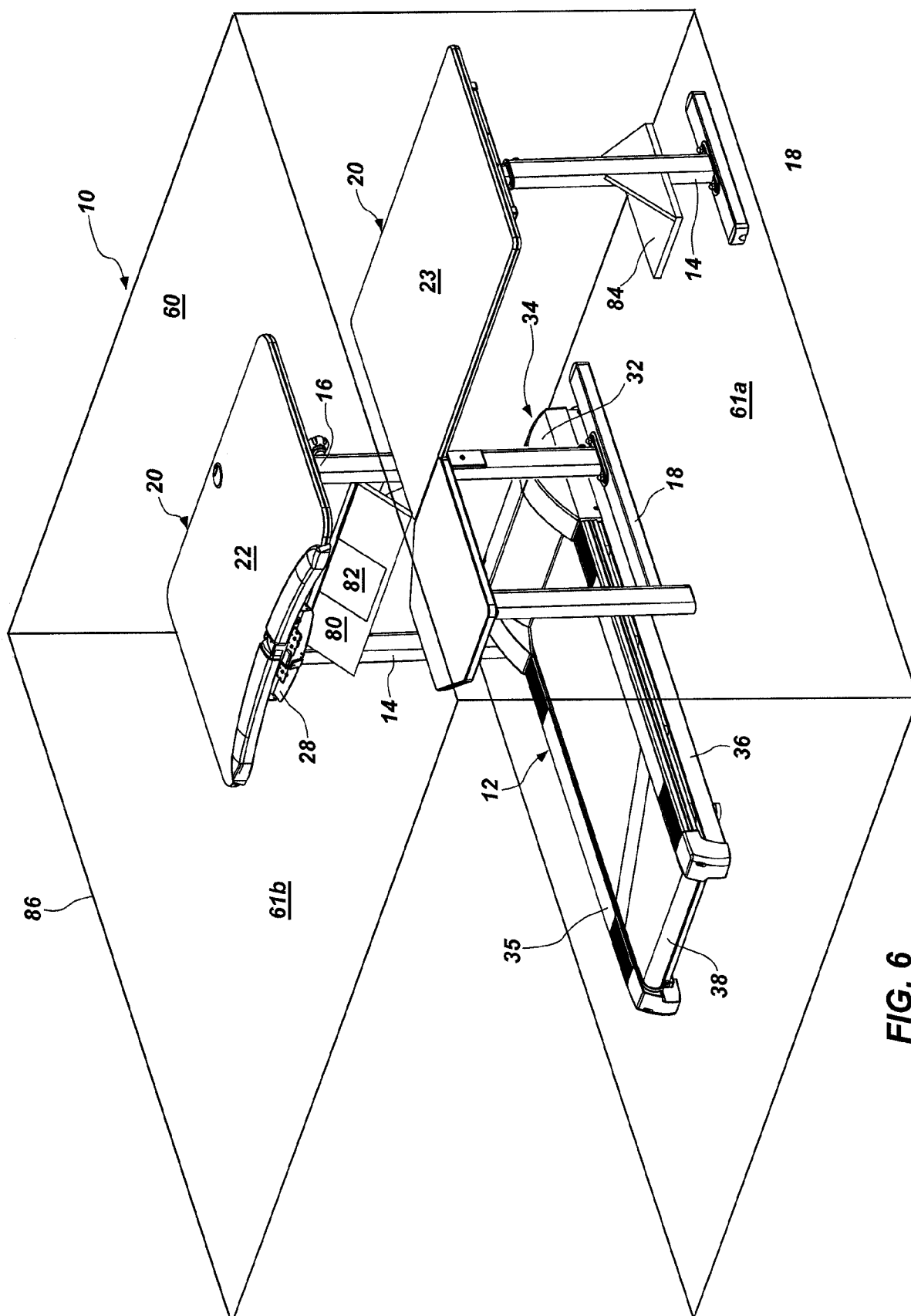


FIG. 5



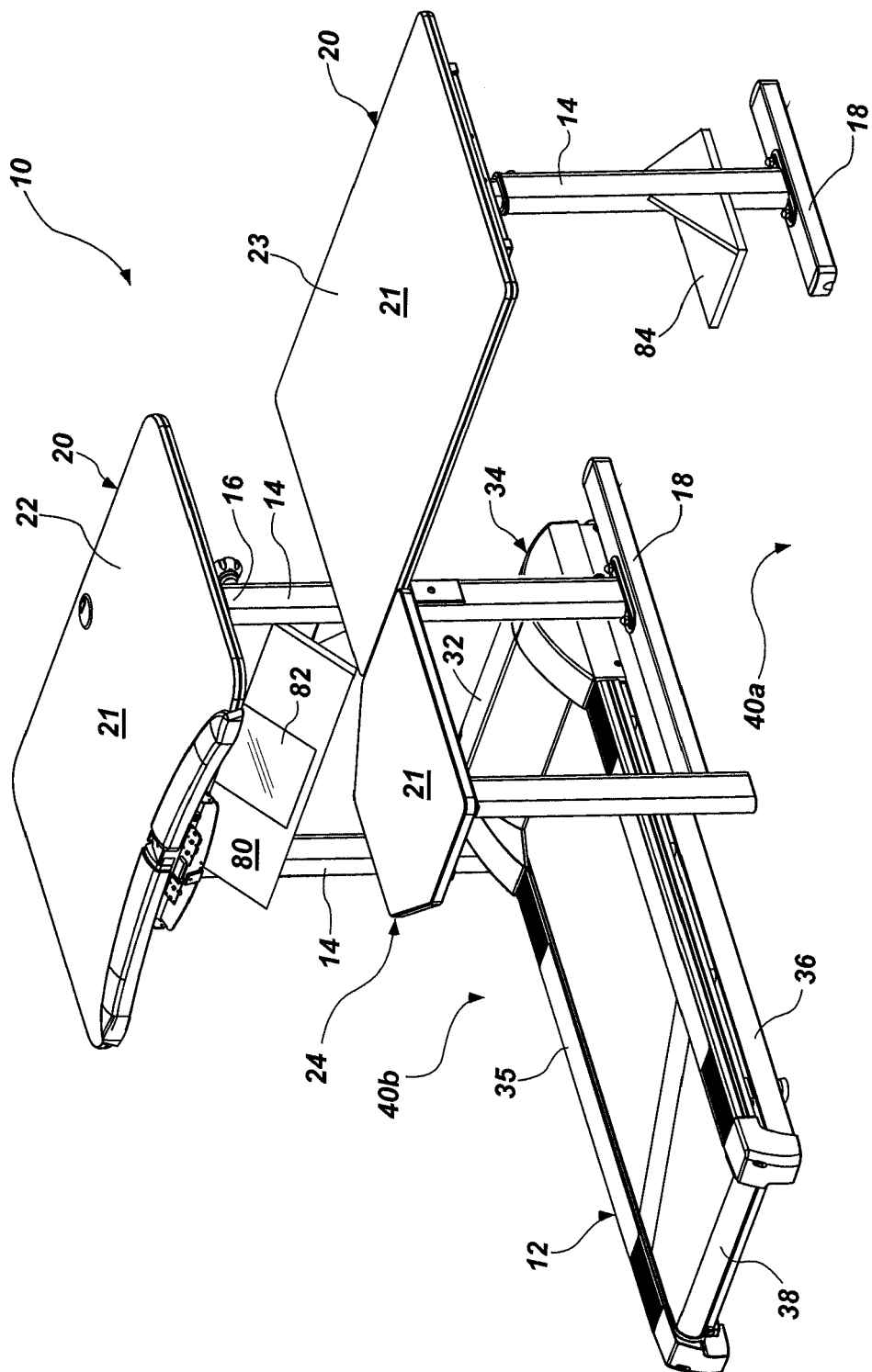


FIG. 7

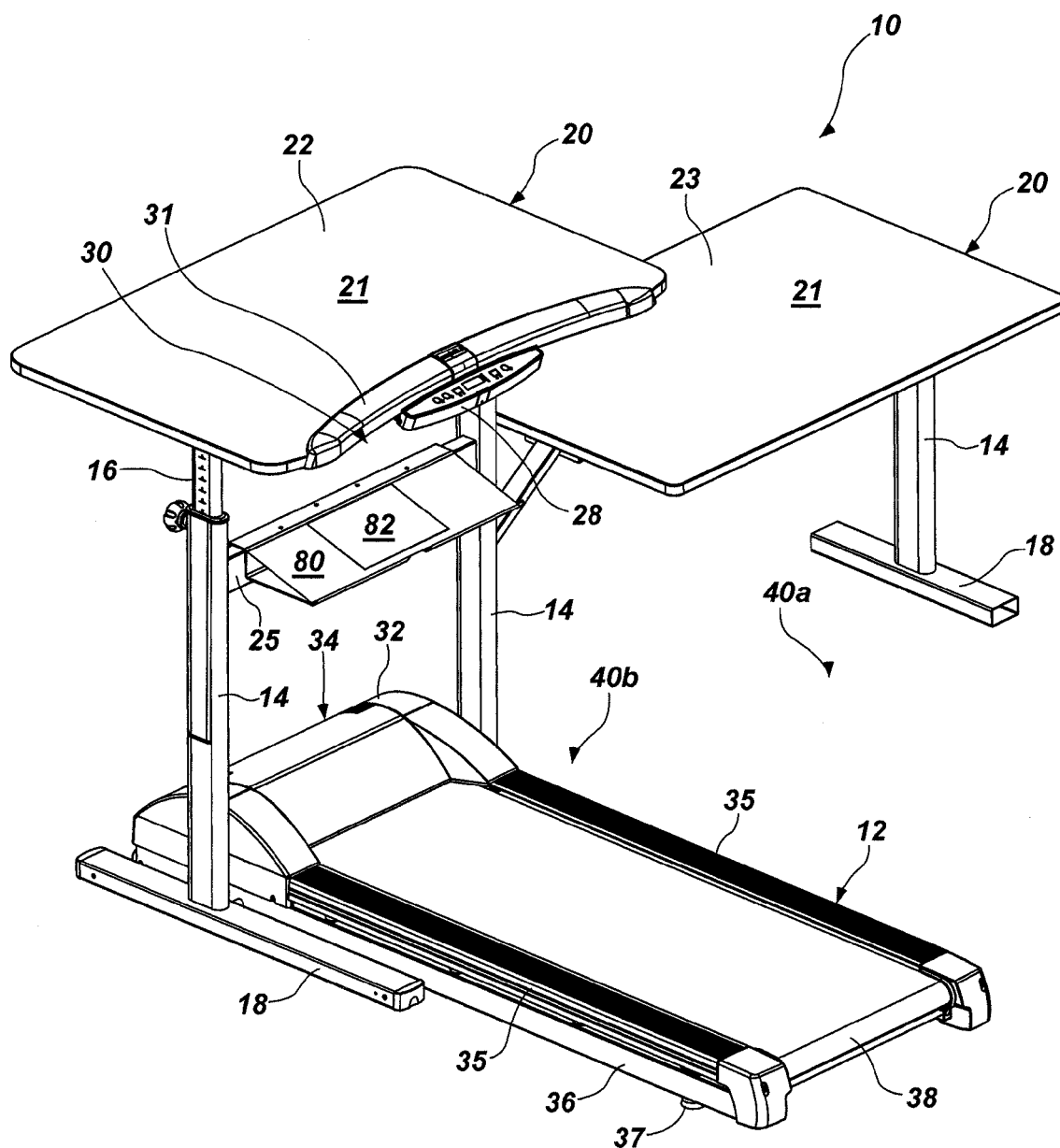


FIG. 8

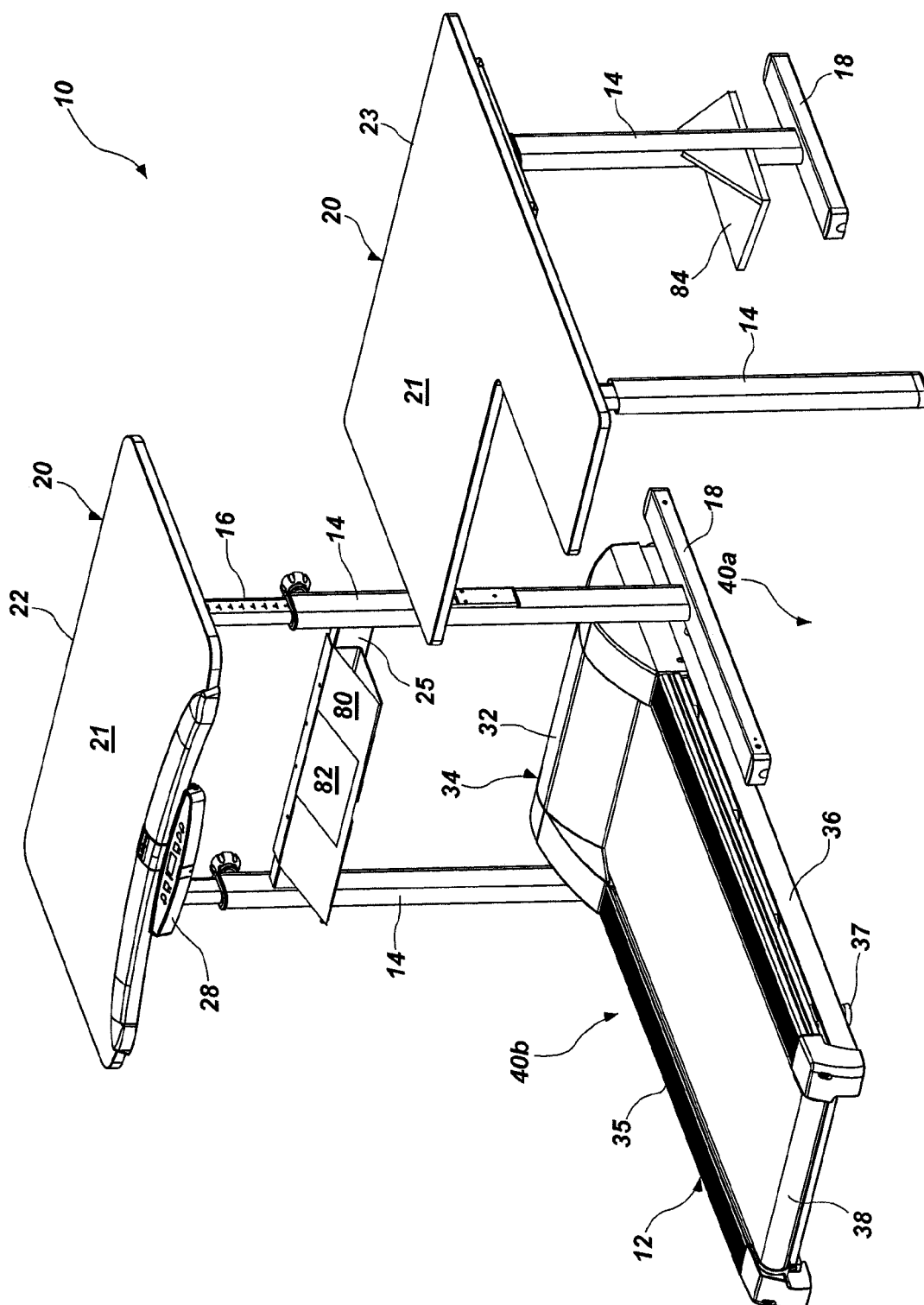


FIG. 9

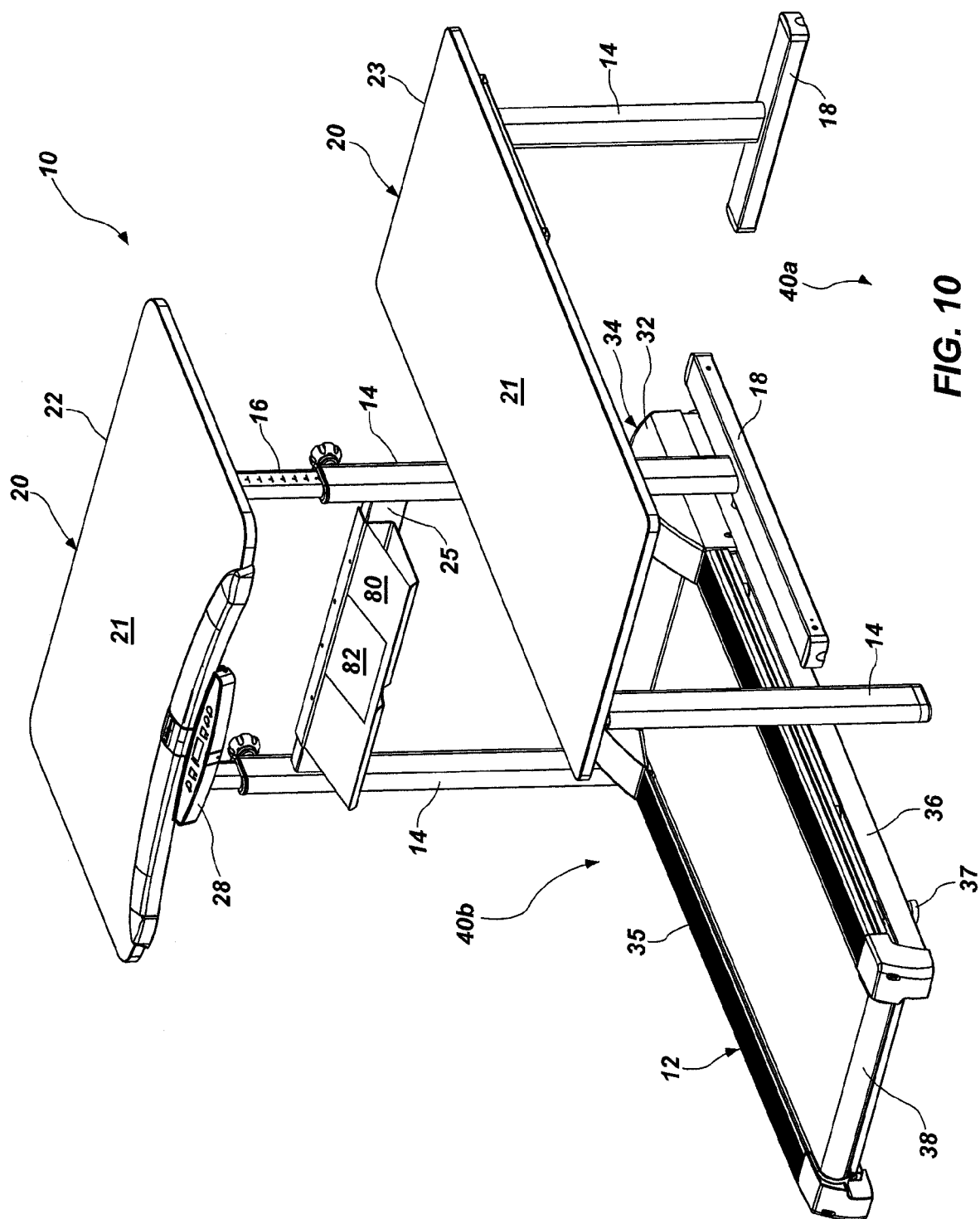


FIG. 10

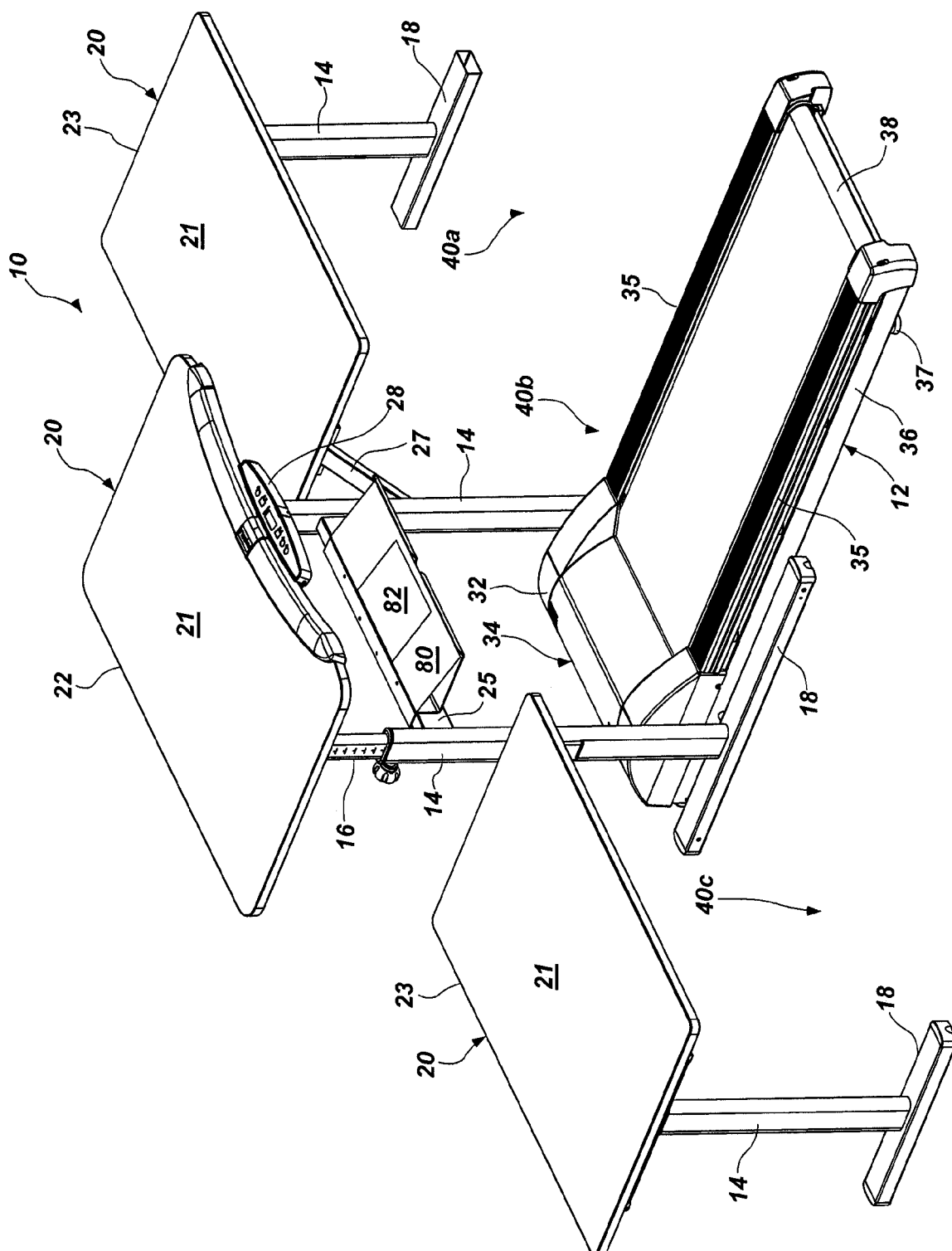


FIG. 11

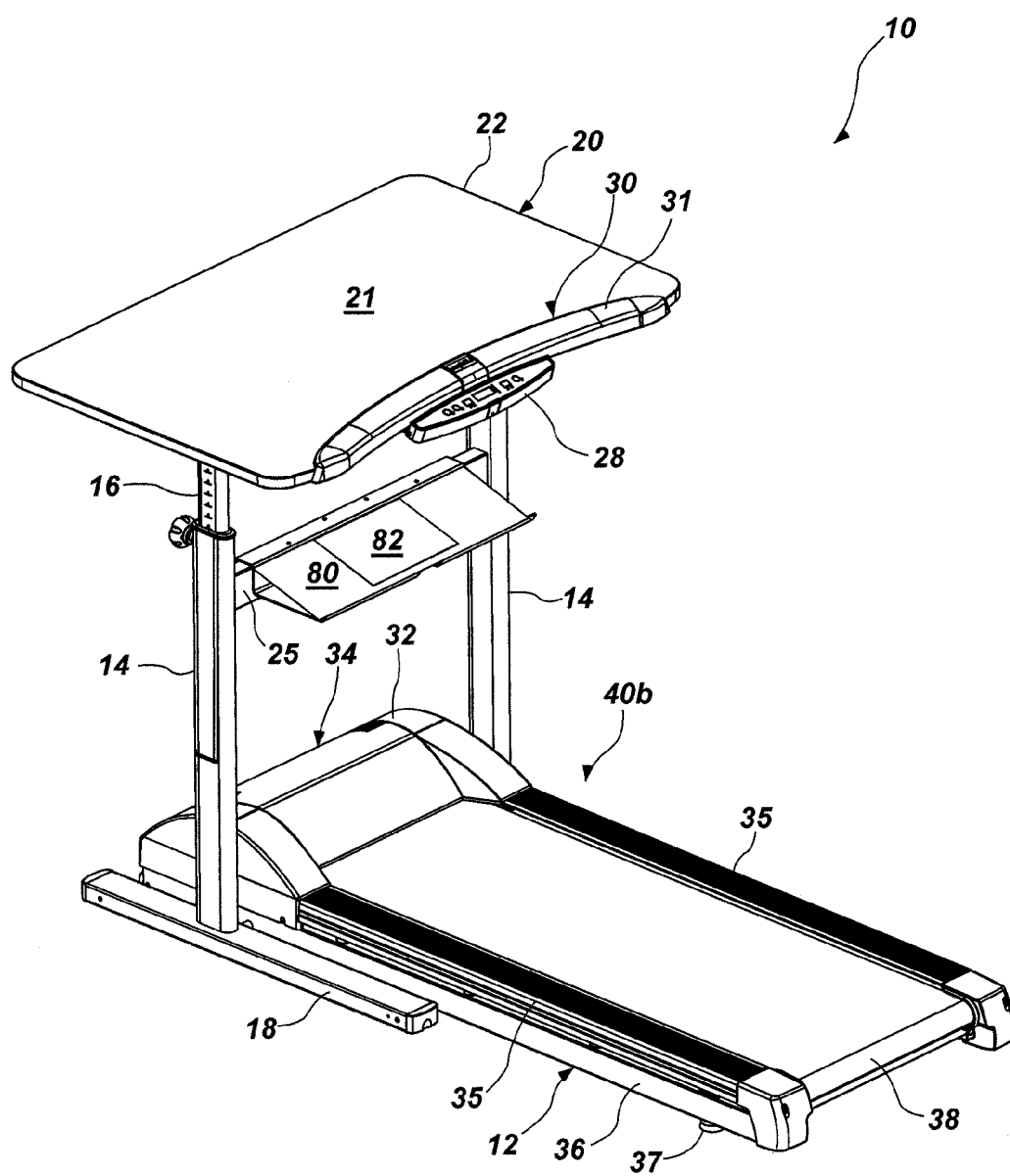


FIG. 12

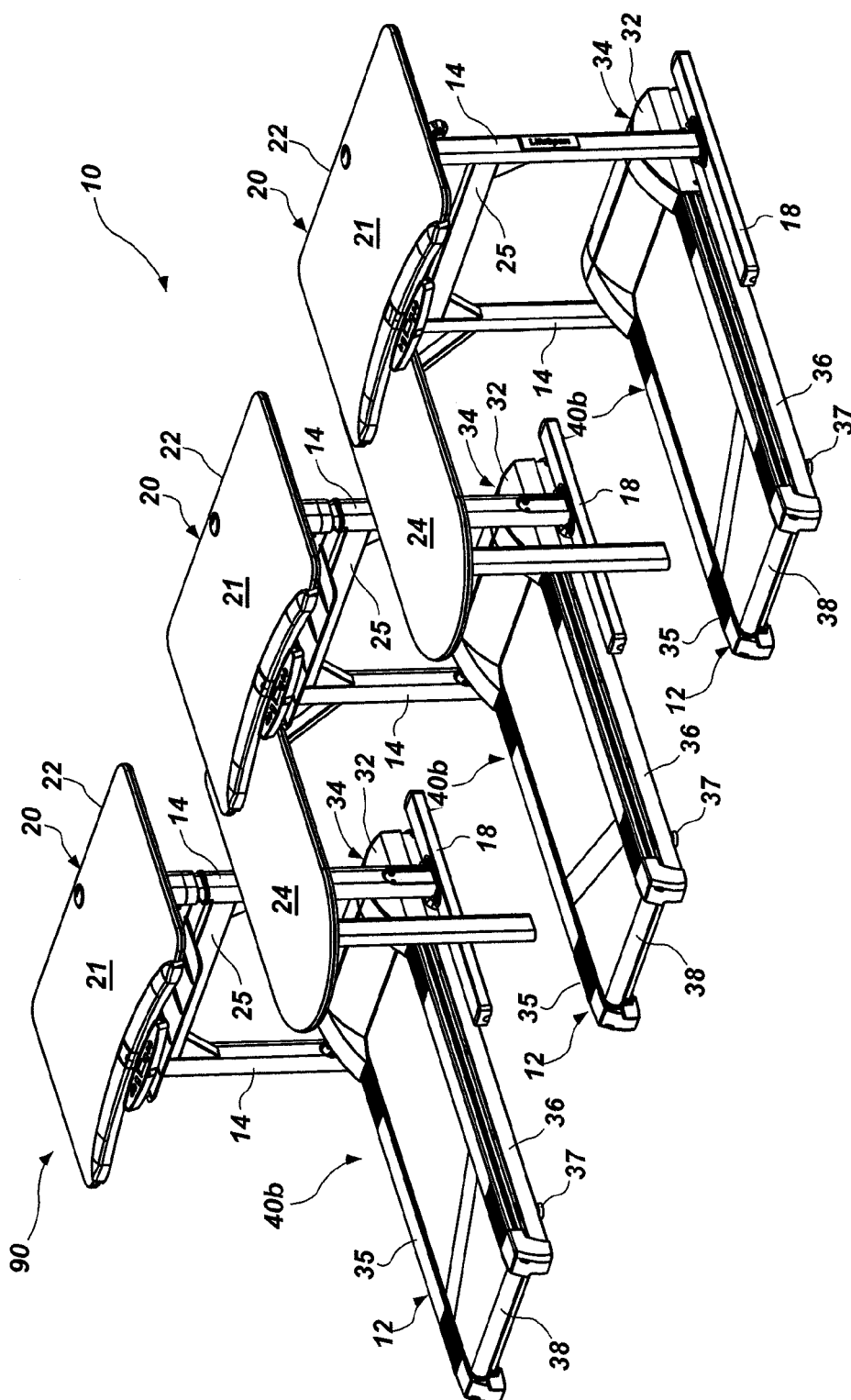


FIG. 13

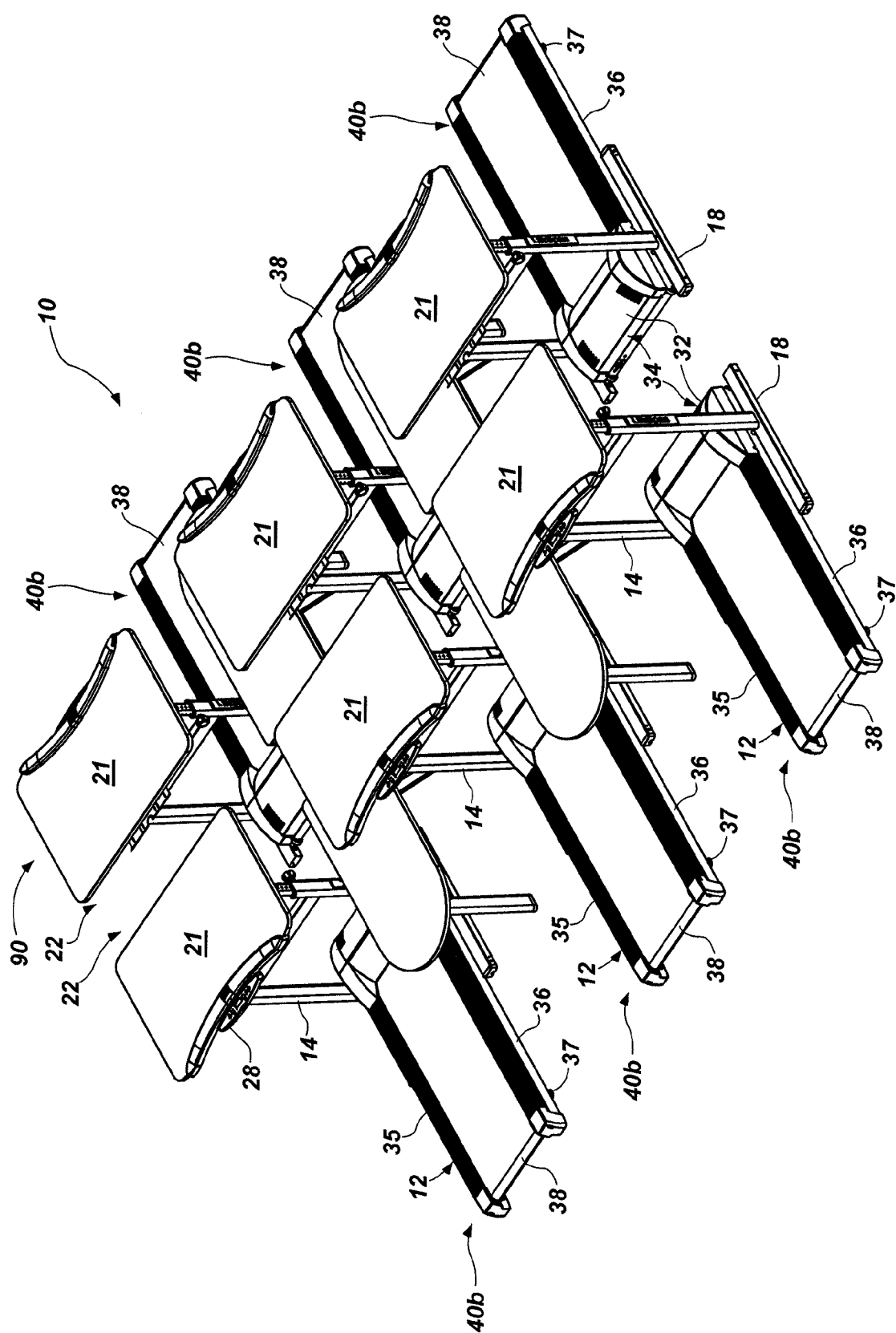


FIG. 14

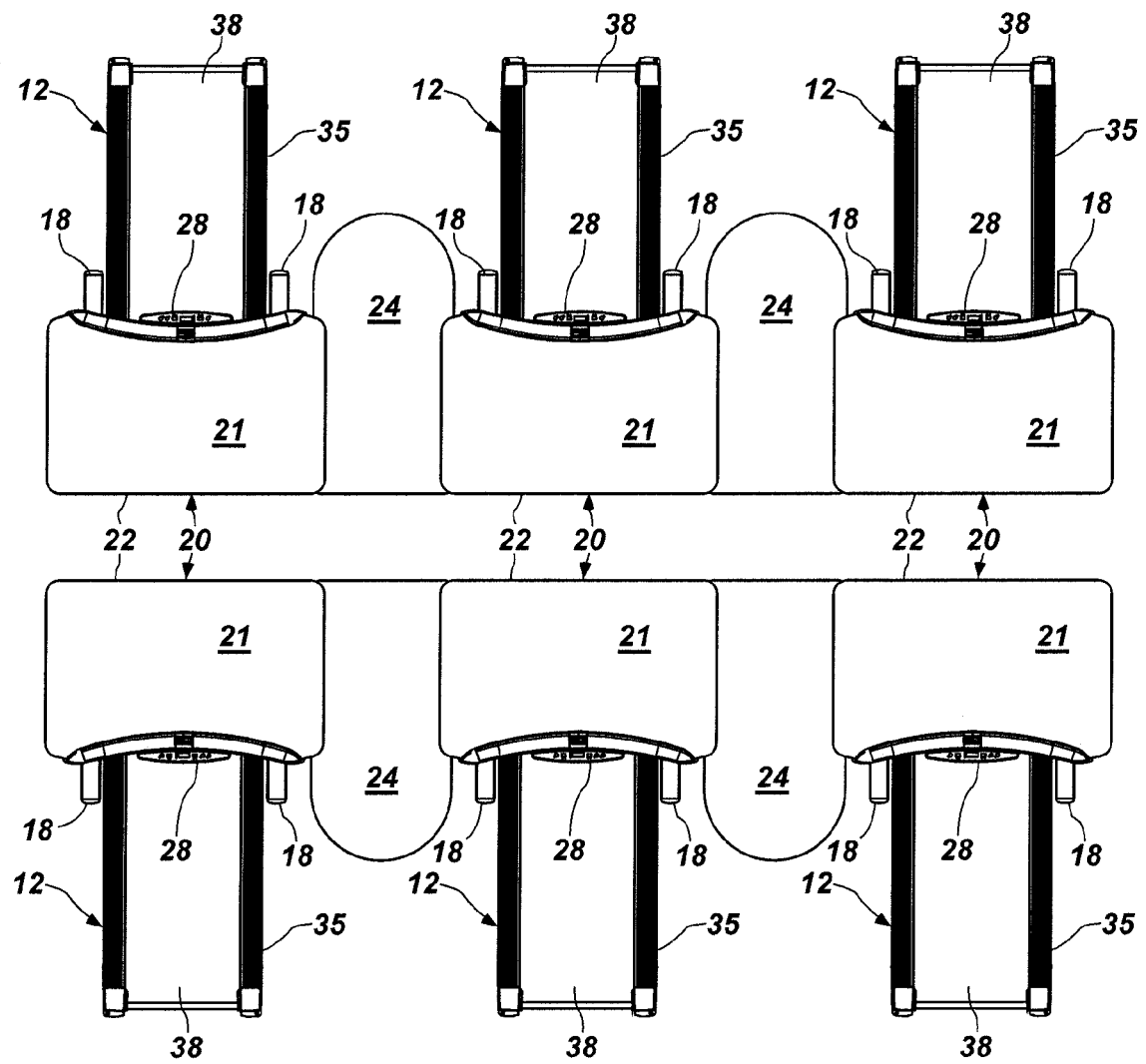


FIG. 15

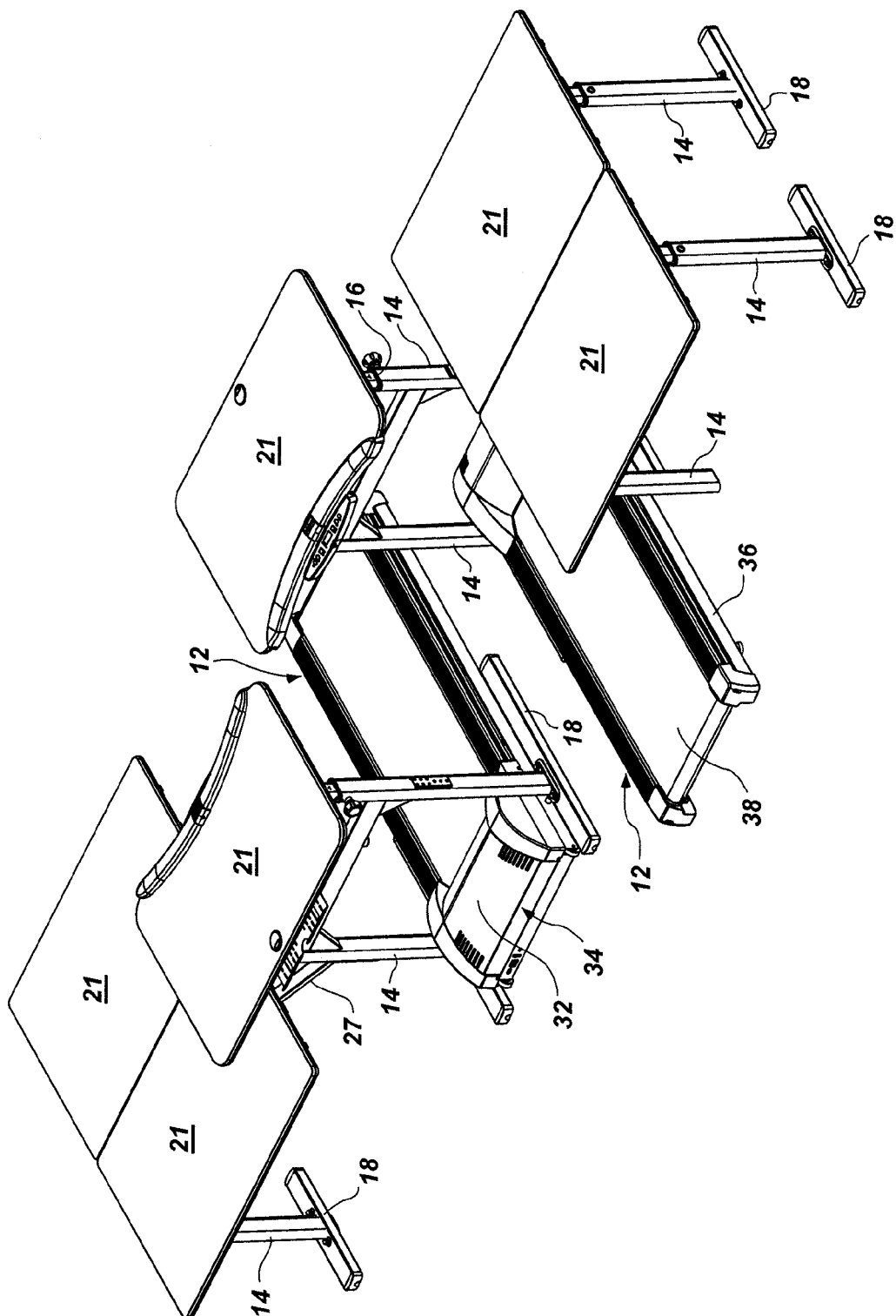


FIG. 16



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 14 17 0021

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of the search 16 October 2014	Examiner Jones, Clive
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82