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(71) Applicant: **American Inventor Products, Inc.**
West Dundee, Illinois 60118 (US)

(72) Inventor: **Konkey, Kenneth J.**
West Dundee, Illinois 60118 (US)

(74) Representative: **Linhart, Friedrich Karl Eberhard**
La Couronnette
1166 Perroy (CH)

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(54) **CLEANING ACCESSORY**

(57) A cleaning accessory has a slit and an aperture to aid in cleaning a desired object. The slit is offset from the center of the cleaning accessory. The slit, among other uses, is useful for cleaning objects with edges or

rims and also, sharp objects. The aperture is useful for gripping the cleaning accessory. Also, the cleaning accessory has a top layer and a bottom layer. A method for using the cleaning accessory is also disclosed.

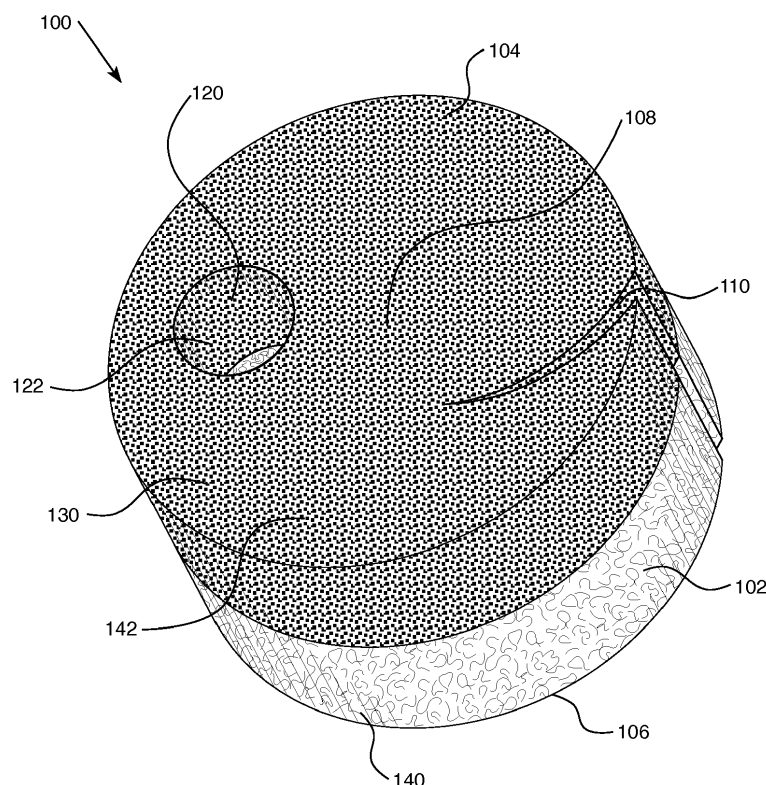


FIG. 1

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Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to a cleaning accessory and more particularly to a cleaning accessory with a slit to aid in cleaning. A method for using the cleaning accessory is also disclosed.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Doing dishes often requires the work of a cleaning accessory. In order to be useful, the cleaning accessory must be strong enough to thoroughly clean the dishes, but also must not damage the dishes. This is especially true for more delicate dishes such as china and glassware. Especially for glassware, cleaning the rim and interior of the glass can be difficult as the glass is generally breakable and the rim and interior can be hard to reach. A cleaning accessory that makes it easier to clean dishes and also, easier to clean difficult to reach places in delicate dishes will be a useful invention.

[0003] Also, cleaning sharp objects such as knives can be dangerous. The sharp objects must be cleaned, yet doing so can pose risks to the user who can cut or otherwise injure himself or herself. A cleaning accessory that will allow a user to thoroughly clean sharp objects while reducing the risk of harm or injury to the user will be a useful invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0004] An objective of the present invention is the provision of a cleaning accessory with a scrubbing layer and a scouring layer to allow great flexibility.

[0005] Also, an objective of the present invention is the provision of a cleaning accessory with a slit.

[0006] Moreover, an objective of the present invention is the provision of a cleaning accessory with an aperture to aid in gripping the cleaning accessory.

[0007] Finally, an objective of the present invention is the provision of a method of using the cleaning accessory.

[0008] These and other objectives of the invention (which other objectives become clear by consideration of the specification, claims, and drawings as a whole) are met by providing a cleaning accessory with a slit and an aperture.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009]

Figure 1 depicts a top perspective view of the cleaning accessory 100 of this invention.

Figure 2 depicts a top plan view of the cleaning accessory 100.

Figure 3 depicts a bottom plan view of the cleaning

accessory 100.

Figure 4 depicts a front elevational view of the cleaning accessory 100.

Figure 5 depicts a rear elevational view of the cleaning accessory 100.

Figure 6 depicts a left elevational view of the cleaning accessory 100.

Figure 7 depicts a right elevational view of the cleaning accessory 100.

Figure 8 depicts a perspective view of the cleaning accessory 100 in use with a knife and the knife is depicted in phantom.

Figure 9 depicts a perspective view of the cleaning accessory 100 in use with a glass and the glass is depicted in phantom.

[0010] Throughout the figures of the drawings, where the same or similar part appears in one or more than one figure of the drawings, the same or similar number is applied thereto.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0011] Reference will now be made in detail to several embodiments of the invention that are illustrated in the accompanying drawings. Whenever possible, the same or similar reference numerals are used in the drawings and the description to refer to the same or like parts or steps. The drawings are in simplified form and are not to precise scale. For purposes of convenience and clarity only, directional terms such as top, bottom, left, right, up, over, above, below, beneath, rear, and front, may be used with respect to the drawings. These and similar directional terms are not to be construed to limit the scope of the invention in any manner. The words attach, connect, couple, and similar terms with their inflectional morphemes do not necessarily denote direct or intermediate connections, but may also include connections through mediate elements or devices.

[0012] This invention discloses a cleaning accessory and throughout the disclosure references are made to the cleaning accessory being used to clean dishes. However, these references are meant to be exemplary and are not meant to limit the scope of the disclosure in any manner. The cleaning accessory can be used to clean any suitable object (including industrial, household, or otherwise) and all such objects are encompassed by this disclosure.

[0013] This invention discloses, as the preferred embodiment, a cleaning accessory with a scrubbing layer and a scouring layer. A scrubbing layer and a scouring layer are defined below.

[0014] A layer, material, or surface suitable for scrubbing is intended to remove material present on the surface of the object to be scrubbed without significantly abrading or scratching the surface or removing more than minor amounts of material comprising the object to be

scrubbed. Material affixed to a layer of the cleaning accessory or a material comprising a layer of the cleaning accessory which makes it suitable for scrubbing forms a scrubbing layer.

[0015] A layer, material, or surface suitable for scouring is intended to remove material present on the surface of the object to be scoured and/or remove material which has chemically or physically bonded with the surface of the object to be scoured and will significantly abrade, scratch, or remove more than minor amounts of material from the object to be scoured. Material affixed to a layer of the cleaning accessory or a material comprising a layer of the cleaning accessory which makes it suitable for scouring forms a scouring layer.

[0016] It is optional that the cleaning accessory be made of an open-cell foam surrounded by a flexible non-porous coating. It is optional that the open-cell foam be an ester-based foam, an ether-based foam, or a silicone-based foam which is durable, non-water-soluble, and resistant to crushing and chemical interaction.

[0017] The flexible non-porous coating material can be a post-mold spray-applied coating molded onto the cleaning accessory, applied to the cleaning accessory via a dip or drench, or by any other reasonable means. Depending on the nature and structure of the open-cell foam, the coating can permeate the body of the cleaning accessory to any degree so long as the coated surface retains the properties described herein.

[0018] It is optional, but neither preferred nor required, to use silicone, liquid vinyl, or liquid rubber as the coating material. Silicone coatings can extend the life of the cleaning accessory, collect debris more effectively than open-cell foam alone or many other kinds of coating material, add UV resistance, enhance the open cell foam's elasticity and strength in water or with use of cleaning chemicals and can be applied in either a clear coat or in any desired color.

[0019] Now adding Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8, and Figure 9 to the consideration, the structure and function of cleaning accessory 100 can be clearly seen. Cleaning accessory 100 has outer edge 102, top surface 104, and base 106.

[0020] Cleaning accessory 100 has top layer 130 and bottom layer 140. It is preferred, but not required, that top layer 130 is a scrubbing layer and bottom layer 140 is a scouring layer or that top layer 130 is a scouring layer and bottom layer 140 is a scrubbing layer. Cleaning accessory 100 also has slit 110. Slit 110 has interior 112. In the preferred embodiment, slit 110 extends from the top surface 104 to the base 106 of cleaning accessory 100.

[0021] Slit 110 extends from the outer edge 102 of cleaning accessory 100 and through top layer 130 and bottom layer 140 and toward the accessory interior 142 of cleaning accessory 100 and deviating from center 108 by an angle or a curved line. Slit 110 is offset from center 108 of cleaning accessory 100. Slit 110 can be located anywhere on cleaning accessory 100 as long as it is offset

from the center 108. It is preferred, but not required, that slit 110 be curved.

[0022] Cleaning accessory 100 also has aperture 120. Aperture 120 has aperture interior 122. Aperture 120 serves as a gripping point for the thumb or the fingers of the user to grip the cleaning accessory 100 securely for use.

[0023] Now referring specifically to Figure 8, cleaning accessory 100 can be used to clean sharp objects such as a knife. In the description, a knife is used as an example of a sharp object that can be cleaned with cleaning accessory 100 and the knife is meant to be an example, but not limit the scope of objects that can be cleaned with cleaning accessory 100 and all objects that can be cleaned with cleaning accessory 100 are encompassed by this disclosure.

[0024] The knife or other sharp object is inserted into slit 110 with the sharp side of the knife or other sharp object pointing outward toward the outer edge 102 of the cleaning accessory 100. This allows the sharp side of the knife or other sharp object to be cleaned by the cleaning accessory 100 while keeping the sharp side away from the hands and/or body of the user. Cleaning accessory 100 can clean both sides of the knife or other sharp object in this manner. Also, since slit 110 is not enclosed on both sides and is open on the outer edge 102, the knife or other sharp object can be removed without causing damage to the material of the cleaning accessory 100.

[0025] Now referring specifically to Figure 9, the functionality of slit 110 can clearly be seen. Cleaning accessory 100 can be used to clean glasses or other objects with edges. In the description, a glass is used as an example of an object with edges that can be cleaned with cleaning accessory 100 and the glass is meant to be an example, but not limit the scope of objects that can be cleaned with cleaning accessory 100 and all objects that can be cleaned with cleaning accessory 100 are encompassed by this disclosure.

[0026] The edge of the glass or other object can be inserted into the slit 110 of cleaning accessory 100. This way both sides of the glass or other object can be cleaned by cleaning accessory 100. This is especially beneficial for glasses and other objects that may have hard to reach places for cleaning.

[0027] In the preferred embodiment, slit 110 is curved. This provides even more advantages for the user of cleaning accessory 100. When cleaning the rim of a glass or other edges, the user can place the cleaning accessory so that the curvature (or off-center position if slit 110 is not curved) of slit 110 allows for the majority of the cleaning accessory 100 to be on the outside of the glass while a smaller portion of the cleaning accessory 100 is on the inside of the glass. The placement of slit 110 on the glass or other object to be cleaned is preferred to be favored towards the outer edge 102 of the cleaning accessory 100 as opposed to directly in the center 108. This provides great advantages because with less of the cleaning accessory 100 inside of the glass or other object, there

is a reduced chance of breaking the glass or other object. While a curved slit 110 is preferred, any form of slit 110 can be utilized and is encompassed by this disclosure.

[0028] An exemplary method for using the cleaning accessory comprises the following steps. As will be obvious to persons of ordinary skill in the art, the steps, or steps equivalent thereto, may be practiced in any reasonable order which will produce the desired result.

1) A person obtains a cleaning accessory 100 and an object to be cleaned.

2) The person decides which surface (102, 104, or 106) of the cleaning accessory 100 or the slit 110 will be used.

3) If a surface (102, 104, or 106) of the cleaning accessory 100 is selected in STEP 2, the person decides if the top layer 130, the bottom layer 140, or both are to be used. Otherwise, the person proceeds to STEP 6.

4) In an optional step, aperture 120 may be used. If the aperture 120 is used, then the person inserts either a portion or the entirety of one or more of his or her fingers and/or thumb into aperture 120. The user may also insert a portion or entirety of one or more fingers and/or thumb into aperture 120 entering from the top layer 130 and insert a portion or entirety of one or more fingers and/or thumb into aperture 120 entering from bottom layer 140 and all inserted fingers and/or thumb may grip the cleaning accessory 100 simultaneously.

5) The person then applies the selected surface (102, 104, or 106) and layer (130, 140, or both) of the cleaning accessory 100 to the object to be cleaned. The person can repeat this STEP 5 for as many times as are necessary or desired.

6) If the slit 110 is selected in STEP 2, the person can select to utilize optional STEP 4. Otherwise, the person proceeds to STEP 7.

7) The person inserts either a portion or the entirety of the object to be cleaned into the slit 110. The person then applies the interior 112 of slit 110 to a portion or the entirety of the object to be cleaned. The person can repeat STEP 7 for as many times as are necessary or desired.

8) When cleaning is finished, the person removes the object to be cleaned from the slit 110.

[0029] STEPS 2 and 3 can be repeated as many times as desired. STEPS 3 and 4 can be in any interchangeable order and STEPS 3 through 5 can be repeated as necessary. STEPS 6 and 7 can be in any interchangeable order and STEPS 6 through 8 can be repeated as necessary. A person can engage in STEPS 3 through 5 and STEPS 6 through 8 for the same object for as many times as desired and the groups (STEPS 3 through 5 and STEPS 6 through 8) can be in any desired order and used as many times as desired. The entirety of STEPS 1 through 8 can be repeated for as many objects as de-

sired. Though obviously a) the person cannot engage in STEPS 6 through 8 unless either a portion of or the entirety of the object to be cleaned can be accommodated by the interior 112 of slit 110, b) the person cannot repeat STEP 4 if one or more of the person's fingers and/or thumb are already inserted into aperture 120, and c) the person cannot repeat STEP 8 if the object has already been removed from the slit 110.

[0030] This application -- taken as a whole with the abstract, specification, claims, and drawings -- provides sufficient information for a person having ordinary skill in the art to practice the invention disclosed and claimed herein. Any measures necessary to practice this invention are well within the skill of a person having ordinary skill in this art after that person has made a careful study of this disclosure.

[0031] Because of this disclosure and solely because of this disclosure, modification of this method and device can become clear to a person having ordinary skill in this particular art. Such modifications are clearly covered by this disclosure.

Claims

1. A cleaning accessory comprising:

- a) the cleaning accessory having a top surface, a base, and an outer edge; and
- b) a slit, wherein the slit extends from the outer edge of the cleaning accessory toward an accessory interior of the cleaning accessory.

2. The cleaning accessory of Claim 1 further comprising:

- a) the cleaning accessory having a top layer and a bottom layer;
- b) the slit extending through the entirety of the top layer and the entirety of the bottom layer, wherein the slit forms a continuous line from the top surface of the top layer to the base of the bottom layer; and
- c) the slit being offset from the center of the cleaning accessory.

3. The cleaning accessory of Claim 1 further comprising:

- a) the slit being curved.

4. The cleaning accessory of Claim 2 further comprising:

- a) the slit being curved.

5. The cleaning accessory of Claim 2 further comprising:

- a) the top layer being a scrubbing layer; and
b) the bottom layer being a scouring layer.
6. The cleaning accessory of Claim 3 further comprising: 5
- a) the cleaning accessory having a top layer and a bottom layer;
b) the top layer being a scrubbing layer; and
c) the bottom layer being a scouring layer. 10
7. The cleaning accessory of Claim 4 further comprising:
- a) the top layer being a scrubbing layer; and 15
b) the bottom layer being a scouring layer.
8. The cleaning accessory according to any of the previous claims further comprising the cleaning accessory having an aperture. 20
9. The cleaning accessory of Claim 8 wherein the aperture extends from the top surface of a top layer of the cleaning accessory to the base of a bottom layer of the cleaning accessory. 25
10. The cleaning accessory of Claim 8 wherein the aperture extends from the top surface of the top layer of the cleaning accessory to the base of the bottom layer of the cleaning accessory. 30
11. The cleaning accessory of Claim 8 wherein the aperture extends from the top surface of a top layer of the cleaning accessory to the base of a bottom layer of the cleaning accessory. 35
12. The cleaning accessory of Claim 8 wherein the aperture extends from the top surface of the top layer of the cleaning accessory to the base of the bottom layer of the cleaning accessory. 40
13. A method of using a cleaning accessory, the method comprising:
- a) obtaining a cleaning accessory and an object to be cleaned, wherein the cleaning accessory has a scrubbing layer, a scouring layer, a slit, and an aperture; 45
b) selecting the scouring layer, the scrubbing layer or both, or the slit to clean the desired object; and 50
c) using the cleaning accessory to clean the desired object.
14. The method of Claim 13 further comprising: 55
- a) selecting the slit;
b) inserting at least one finger and/or thumb into

the aperture entering through a top layer of the cleaning accessory and inserting at least one finger and/or thumb into the aperture entering through a bottom layer of the cleaning accessory; and
c) applying the slit to the desired object, wherein a portion or an entirety of the desired object is placed within an interior of the slit and the cleaning accessory is applied to the portion or the entirety of the desired object.

15. The method of Claim 13 further comprising:

a) applying the scrubbing layer to a portion or an entirety of the desired object;
b) applying the scouring layer to the portion or the entirety of the desired object;
c) applying the slit to the desired object, wherein the portion or the entirety of the desired object is placed within an interior of the slit and the cleaning accessory is applied to the portion or the entirety of the desired object; and
d) repeating steps a through c in any desired order and as many times as necessary or desired.

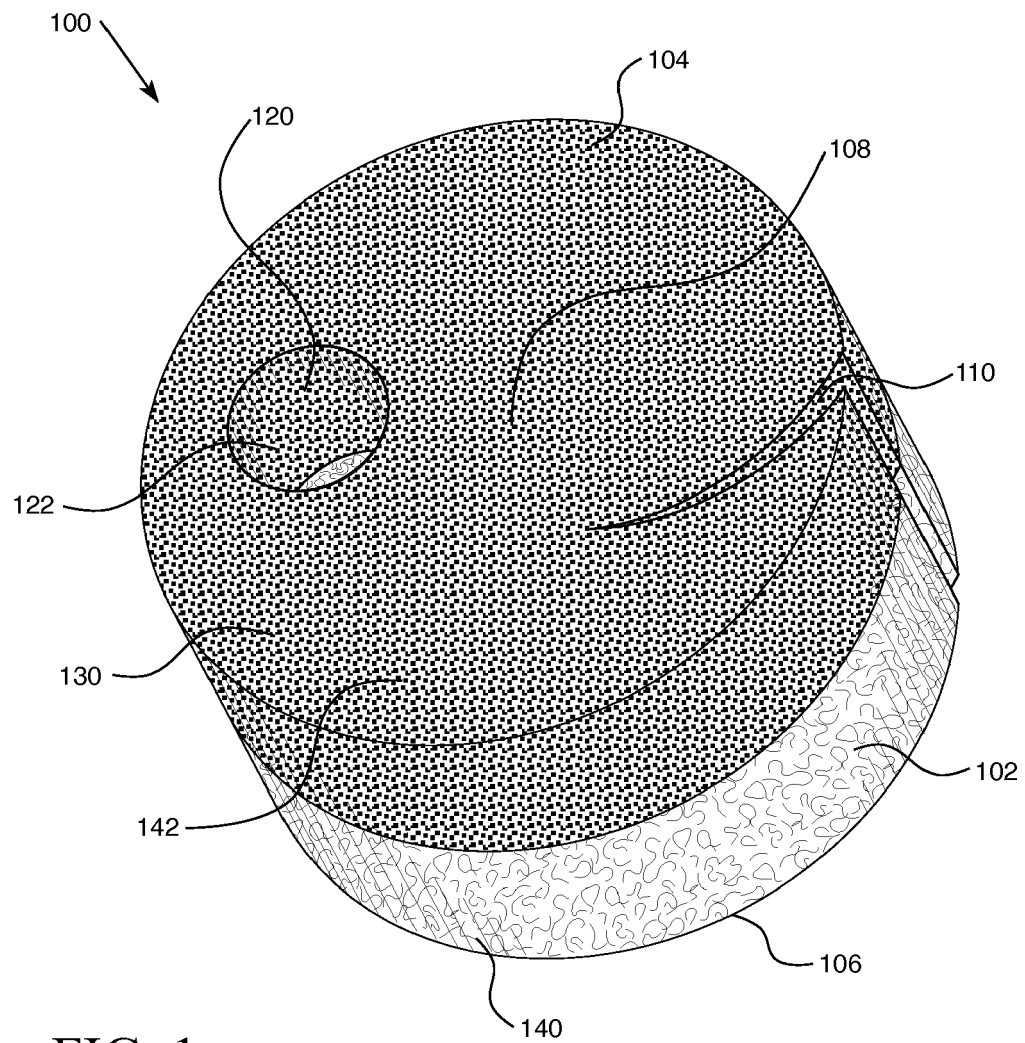


FIG. 1

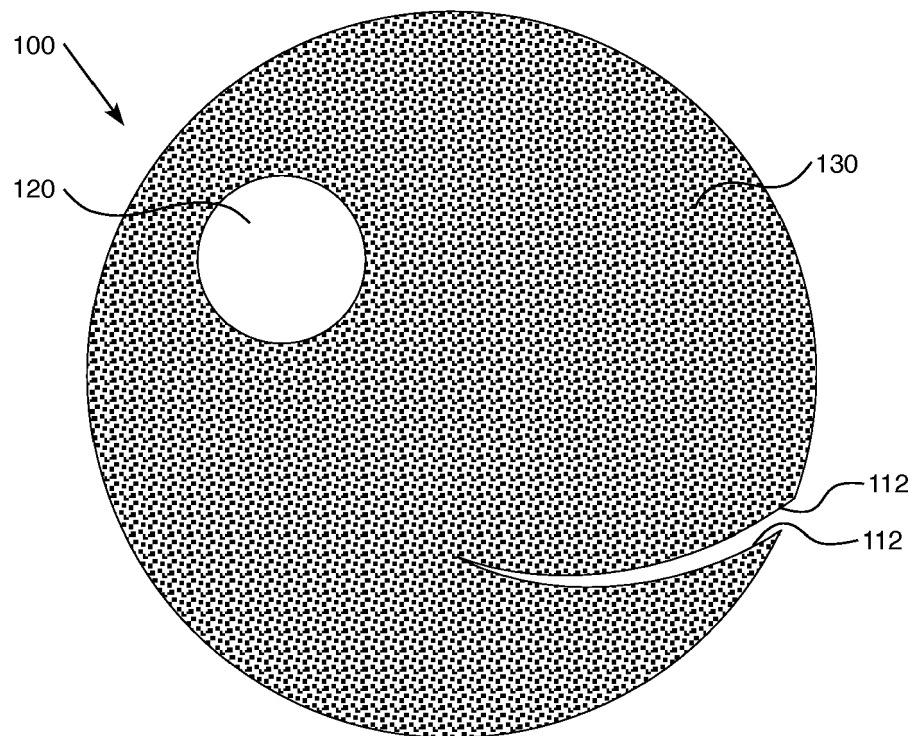


FIG. 2

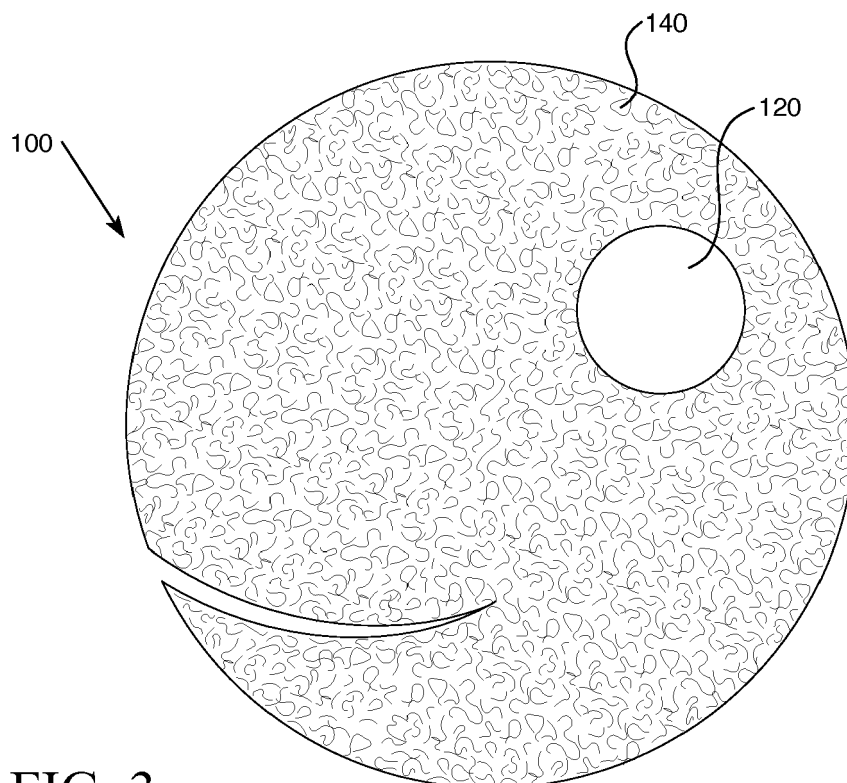


FIG. 3

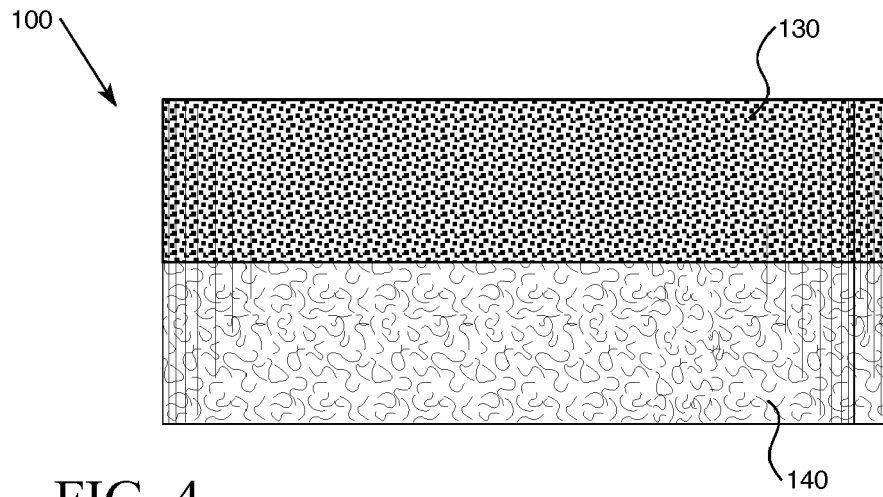


FIG. 4

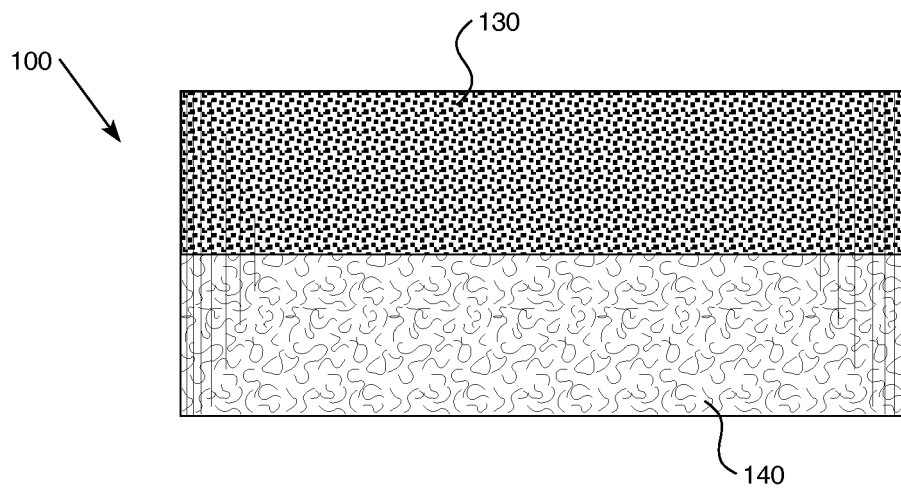
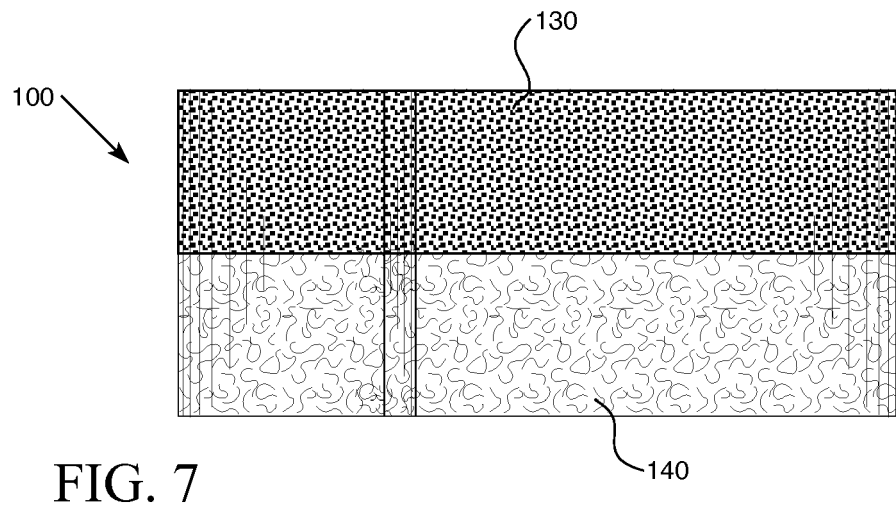
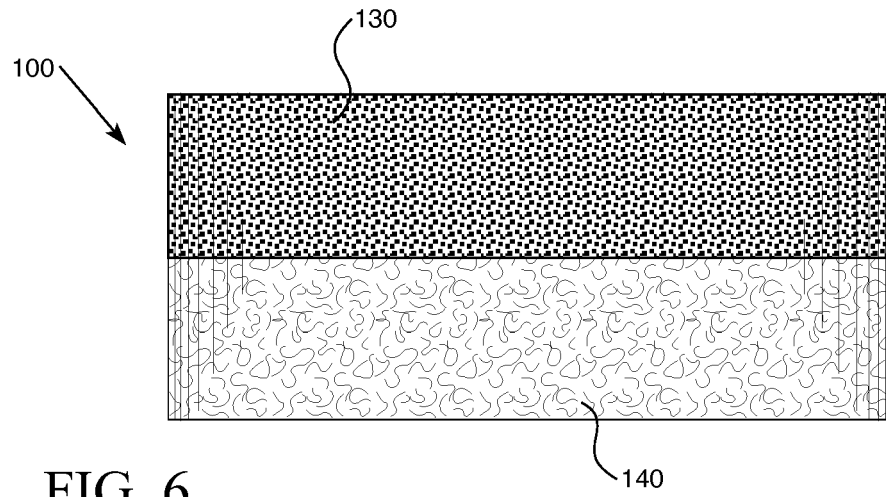


FIG. 5



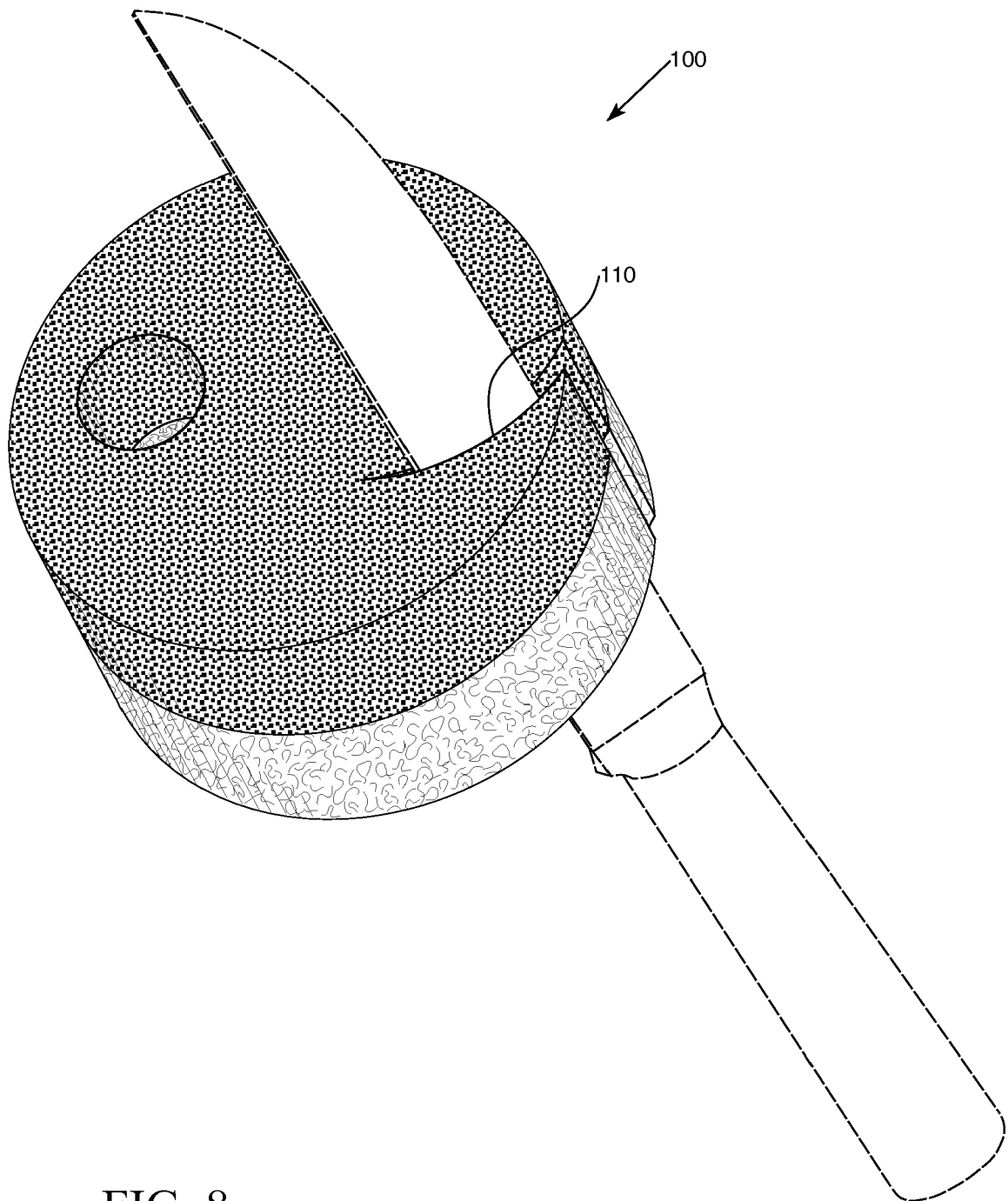


FIG. 8

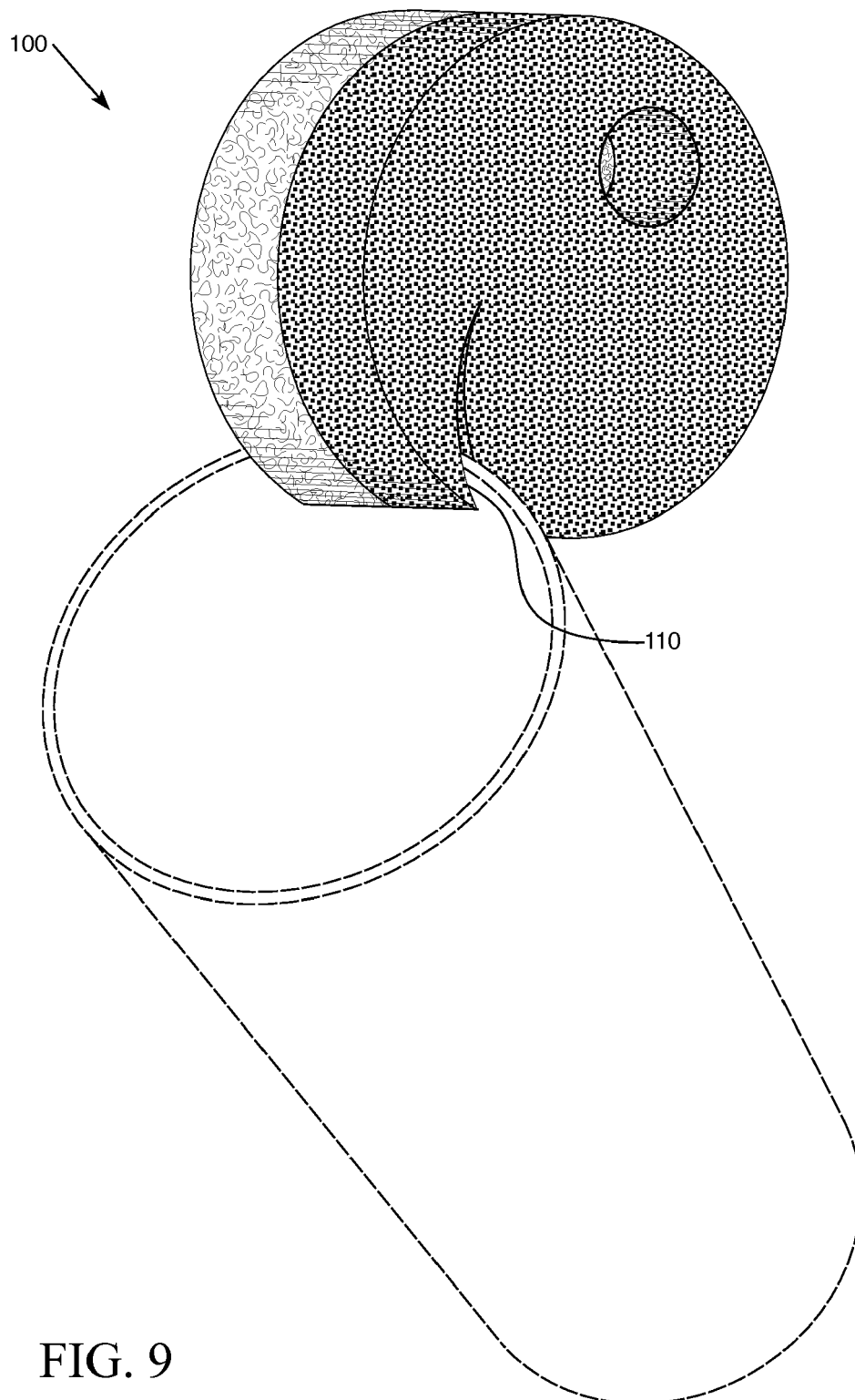


FIG. 9



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 19 20 0656

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	* page 1, left-hand column, paragraph 4 - paragraph 5 *		
	* figure 2 *		
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 30 April 2020	Examiner Redelsperger, C
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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