assessment of the sleep support member's characteristics. Moreover, measuring the comfort/support analysis curve while removing the testing platen from the mattress, in addition to measuring the comfort/support analysis curve while the testing platen is deflecting into the mattress, would allow analysis of the sleep support member's material recovery characteristics.

SUMMARY

[12] Methods and apparatuses are described for comfort/support analysis of a sleep support member. An aspect of the present invention provides a method of testing a sleep support member, the method comprising: identifying the sleep support member; determining a tested comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member before the identified sleep support member is provided to a customer; and determining whether the tested comfort/support value is within a predetermined tolerance level of a goal comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member. The determining a tested comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member is performed while the identified sleep support member is in the manufacturing line.

[13] Another aspect of the present invention provides an apparatus for testing a sleep support member, the apparatus comprising: an identification unit configured to identify the sleep support member; a comfort/support testing unit configured to determine a tested comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member before the identified sleep support member is provided to a customer; and an analysis unit configured to determine whether the tested comfort/support value is within a predetermined tolerance level of a goal comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member. The analysis unit is configured to determine whether the tested comfort/support value is within a predetermined tolerance level of a goal comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member while the identified sleep support member is in the manufacturing line.

[14] Another aspect of the present invention provides a method of testing a sleep support member, the method comprising: identifying the sleep support member; determining a tested comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member while the identified sleep support member is in the manufacturing line; and determining whether the tested comfort/support value is within a predetermined tolerance level of a goal

comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member; wherein the goal comfort/support value comprises at least one goal Indention/Load/Deflection ("ILD") curve.

[14a] Another aspect of the present invention provides a method of testing a sleep support member, the method comprising: identifying the sleep support member; determining a tested comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member before the identified sleep support member is provided to a customer; and determining whether the tested comfort/support value is within a predetermined tolerance level of a goal comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member, wherein the goal comfort/support value is retrieved from a memory.

[14b] Another aspect of the present invention provides an apparatus of testing a sleep support member, the apparatus comprising: an identification unit configured to identify the sleep support member; a comfort/support testing unit configured to determine a tested comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member before the identified sleep support member is provided to a customer; an analysis unit configured to determine whether the tested comfort/support value is within a predetermined tolerance level of a goal comfort/support value for the identified sleep support member; and a memory, wherein the goal comfort/support value is retrieved from the memory.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[15] The above and other aspects will become more apparent by describing in detail illustrative embodiments thereof with reference to the attached drawings in which:

[16] FIG. 1 is a schematic view of a comfort/support analysis system for a sleep support member according to an illustrative embodiment of the present invention; and

[17] FIG. 2 is a schematic view of a first comfort/support analysis system and a second comfort/support analysis system configured to test two opposing sides of a sleep support member according to an illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

[18] Hereinafter, illustrative embodiments of the present invention will be described in detail with reference to the attached drawings.

[19] FIG. 1 shows a sleep support member manufacturing line 100 according to an illustrative embodiment of the present invention. The illustrative sleep support member manufacturing line 100 includes a manufacturing area 25 for manufacturing a sleep support member 50. The sleep support member 50 may comprise a wide variety of sleep system components including, but not limited to, a mattress and/or foundation unit.

[20] According to the illustrative embodiment shown in FIG. 1, each manufactured sleep support member 50 is brought to a conveyor system 20 that conveys the sleep support member 50 from the manufacturing area 25 to a wrapping machine 30 that prepares the sleep support member 50 for shipment by wrapping the sleep support member 50.

[21] While the sleep support member 50 is on the conveyor system 20, the identity of the sleep support member 50 is determined by a reader 40 based on an identifier 42 provided on or in the sleep support member 50. The identifier 42 can include, but is not limited to, a bar