WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A flexible fastening device for fastening a first hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on an article of footwear or apparel and a second hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on the article of footwear or apparel, the fastening device having a body comprising:

first means for coupling, said first means for coupling including a first end portion;

second means for coupling, said second means for coupling including a second end portion; and

adjoining means for adjoining said first and second means for coupling, said adjoining means including a body portion between said first end portion and said second end portion,

wherein the body portion is flexible and is configured and operative to flex such that said first and second end portions can be removably coupled together or such that said first end portion can be removably coupled to the first hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on an article of footwear or apparel and said second end portion can be removably coupled to the second hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on the article of footwear or apparel.

2. The fastening device according to Claim 1,

wherein the body of the device is one-piece,

wherein said first end portion defines a ring and has a single, flexible elongate digit as an extremity of the device,

wherein said second end portion is coupled to said first end portion via said body portion and has a wall having a projection extending therefrom and

which defines a first opening which provides access to a channel surrounded by said second end portion, and

wherein the inside of the ring of said first end portion is sized to fit around the projection, and the first opening and the channel are sized such that the digit fits therethrough and therein, respectively, with a base of the digit arranged adjacent to the first opening.

3. The fastening device according to Claim 2, wherein the channel is a dead end channel having an end thereof formed by said second end portion.

4. The fastening device according to Claim 2, wherein said second end portion further includes a second opening on a side of said device opposite a side of said device associated with the wall and the projection, the second opening providing access to the channel.

5. The fastening device according to Claim 4, wherein the digit does not project from a plane defining the second opening when the body of the digit is inside the channel and the base of the digit is arranged adjacent to the first opening.

6. The fastening device according to Claim 2, wherein a portion of the wall defines a flange around some or all of the projection in plan view, the projection including a sidewall having a groove extending partially or completely therearound, the groove being sized to receive a corresponding portion of the inside of the ring.

7. The fastening device according to Claim 2,

wherein the projection in plan view is one of oval, circular, rectangular, or square, and

wherein the inside of the ring in plan view is one of circular, oval, rectangular, or square.

8. The fastening device according to Claim 7, wherein the plan view shape of the projection does not match the plan view shape of the inside of the ring.

9. The fastening device according to Claim 2, wherein the device is for use as a fastener for footwear or apparel when said first and second end portions are coupled together, or as a piece of jewelry when either said first and second end portions are coupled together or one of said first end portion or said second end portion of said device is coupled to the other of a second end portion or a first end portion of another of said devices.

10. The fastening device according to Claim 1,

wherein the body of said fastening device is a one-piece elastic body,

wherein said second end portion includes an anchor portion having a first face and a second face opposite to the first face; the first face having an upstanding wall with a first aperture providing access to a tunnel and a generally cylindrical shaped anchor projecting upward therefrom, and a flange around the base of said anchor, said anchor having a continuous groove

around its sidewall and a domed top; the second face being substantially smooth,

wherein said first portion includes a ring portion having a first face and a second face opposite to the first face; said ring portion forming a ring with its hollow portion oriented such that an axis passing through a center of the hollow portion is perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the one-piece elastic body, said ring portion having an elongate projection with a rounded tip projecting from a side thereof in the direction of the longitudinal axis,

wherein said body portion has end portions that taper in both side and top views, said body portion having a longitudinal groove running along a portion of its length and a second aperture providing access to the tunnel,

wherein the first face of the ring portion and the first face of the anchor portion are on a first side of the one-piece elastic body, and the second face of the ring portion and the second face of the anchor portion are on a second side of the one-piece elastic body,

wherein the side of said ring portion from which the elongate projection extends is 180 degrees offset from the juncture where said ring portion and said elongate body meet, and

wherein said ring portion and said anchor portion are sized to be arranged as follows when said ring portion and said anchor portion are properly coupled:

the ring of said ring portion elastically fits around the groove of the anchor such that the hollow portion is taken up by the anchor, and on the side of the second face of said ring portion, the ring rests on the flange; and

the elongate projection with a rounded tip is inside the tunnel, extending through the first aperture, while being visible through the second aperture in a bottom view of the one-piece elastic body, but without projecting from a plane defining the second aperture.

11. The fastening device according to Claim 10, wherein said fastening device is one such device in a set of said fastening devices, the set including at least two of said fastening devices.

12. The fastening device according to Claim 11, wherein the set of said fastening devices includes at least two fastening devices each with different overall lengths.

13. The fastening device according to Claim 11, wherein the set of said fastening devices includes at least two fastening devices each with a same overall length.

14. The fastening device according to Claim 10, wherein said flange completely surrounds the base of said anchor portion.

15. The fastening device according to Claim 1,

wherein the body portion of the device is flexible,

wherein said first end portion defines a ring,

wherein said second end portion is coupled to said first end portion via the body portion and has a wall having a projection extending therefrom the

projection defining an anchor portion for coupling with the ring of said first end portion,

wherein the inside of the ring of said first end portion is sized to fit around the anchor portion.

16. The fastening device according to Claim 15, wherein said anchor portion has a concave portion running completely around its sidewall, the concave portion being sized and shaped based on the side and shape of the inside of the ring of said first end portion.

17. The fastening device according to Claim 1,

wherein said first end portion has an extremity portion,

wherein said body portion has a bifurcated body which defines a void region between each of the two portions of the bifurcated body,

wherein the void region runs from said first end portion to said second end portion, and

wherein said second end portion has a Y-shaped channel formed on its upper face defined in part by a projection.

18. The fastening device according to Claim 17, wherein, when the first end portion and the second end portion are properly coupled together, said first end portion is arranged inside the channel such that a juncture where said body portion and said first end portion meet is arranged at a fork of the channel, with the extremity portion of said first end portion facing inwardly, toward said body portion.

19. The fastening device according to Claim 1, wherein

wherein said first end portion defines an opening,

wherein said second end portion is coupled to said first end portion via said body portion and has a wall having a projection extending therefrom, and

wherein the inside of the opening defined by said first end portion is sized to fit around the projection.

20. The fastening device according to Claim 19, wherein said first and second end portions are formed of different material than said body portion.

21. The fastening device according to Claim 1, wherein said second end portion has a projection from a bottom side thereof configured to be coupled to said second end portion or to the the first hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on an article of footwear or apparel

22. The fastening device according to Claim 21,

wherein said second end portion has an adjustable portion slidably coupled thereto,

wherein said second end portion has on a surface thereof a plurality of trenches that are cooperative with a corresponding notch of the adjustable portion to lock the adjustable portion in place, and

wherein the projection of said second end portion is coupled to said adjustable portion.

23. A fastening method comprising:

providing an elastic device for fastening, the elastic device including: a first portion defining a ring and having a flexible elongate projection as an extremity of the device; and a second portion coupled to said first portion and having a wall with a protrusion extending therefrom and defining a first opening which provides access to a tunnel formed by said second portion; and

arranging said device by coupling together said first portion and said second portion,

wherein said arranging includes placement of the ring of the first portion around the protrusion of the second portion such that the interior of the ring surrounds the protrusion and such that the flexible elongate projection of the first portion fits inside the tunnel via the first opening.

24. The method of Claim 23, further comprising: before said arranging step, inserting the elastic device into a pair of holes, eyelets, loops, or hooks of an item.

25. The method of Claim 23, wherein the item is one of apparel, footwear, luggage, a backpack, a bag, a purse, a boxing glove, a punching bag, and football or lacrosse shoulder pads.

26. The method of Claim 23, wherein the elastic device includes a portion that is phosphorescent and/or a portion that flashes.

27. The method of Claim 23, wherein said providing includes forming said elastic device by injection molding.

28. The method of Claim 23, wherein the protrusion of the second portion includes on its upper face, which is visible and not concealed when the first and second portions are coupled together, a removable and replaceable portion, the removable and replaceable portion being removable and replaceable to change a color configuration of the device and/or to change a logo or other indicia on the upper face of the protrusion.

What is claimed is:

1. A flexible fastening device for fastening a first hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on an article of footwear or apparel and a second hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on the article of footwear or apparel, the fastening device having a one-piece body comprising:

first means for coupling, said first means for coupling including a first end portion;

second means for coupling, said second means for coupling including a second end portion; and

adjoining means for adjoining said first and second means for coupling, said adjoining means including a body portion between said first end portion and said second end portion,

wherein the body portion is flexible and is configured and operative to flex such that said first and second end portions can be removably coupled together or such that said first end portion can be removably coupled to the first hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on an article of footwear or apparel and said second end portion can be removably coupled to the second hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on the article of footwear or apparel,

wherein said first end portion defines a ring and has a single, flexible elongate digit as an extremity of the device, said second end portion is coupled to said first end portion via said body portion and has a wall having a projection extending therefrom and which defines a first opening which provides access to a channel surrounded by said second end portion,

wherein the inside of the ring of said first end portion is sized to fit around the projection, and the first opening and the channel are sized such that the digit fits therethrough and therein, respectively, with a base of the digit arranged adjacent to the first opening,

further wherein said second end portion further includes a second opening on a side of said device opposite a side of said device associated with the wall and the projection, the second opening providing access to the channel.

2. The fastening device according to claim 1, wherein the channel is a dead end channel having an end thereof formed by said second end portion.

3. The fastening device according to claim 1, wherein the digit does not project from a plane defining the second opening when the body of the digit is inside the channel and the base of the digit is arranged adjacent to the first opening.

4. The fastening device according to claim 1, wherein a portion of the wall defines a flange around some or all of the projection in plan view, the projection including a sidewall having a groove extending partially or completely therearound, the groove being sized to receive a corresponding portion of the inside of the ring.

5. The fastening device according to claim 1, wherein the projection in plan view is one of oval, circular, rectangular, or square, and wherein the inside of the ring in plan view is one of circular, oval, rectangular, or square.

6. The fastening device according to claim 5, wherein the plan view shape of the projection does not match the plan view shape of the inside of the ring.

7. The fastening device according to claim 1, wherein the device is for use as a fastener for footwear or apparel when said first and second end portions are coupled together, or as a piece of jewelry when either said first and second end portions are coupled together or one of said first end portion or said second end portion of said device is coupled to the other of a second end portion or a first end portion of another of said devices.

8. The fastening device according to claim 1,

wherein the inside of the ring of said first end portion is sized to fit around the anchor portion.

9. The fastening device according to claim 8, wherein said anchor portion has a concave portion running completely around its sidewall, the concave portion being sized and shaped based on the size and shape of the inside of the ring of said first end portion.

10. The device according to claim 1, wherein the protrusion is formed from a different material than the body.

11. A flexible fastening device for fastening a first hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on an article of footwear or apparel and a second hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on the article of footwear or apparel, the fastening device having a one-piece body comprising:

first means for coupling, said first means for coupling including a first end portion;

second means for coupling, said second means for coupling including a second end portion; and

adjoining means for adjoining said first and second means for coupling, said adjoining means including a body portion between said first end portion and said second end portion,

wherein the body portion is flexible and is configured and operative to flex such that said first and second end portions can be removably coupled together or such that said first end portion can be removably coupled to the first hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on an article of footwear or apparel and said second end portion can be removably coupled to the second hole, eyelet, loop, or hook on the article of footwear or apparel,

wherein the body of said fastening device is a one-piece elastic body,

wherein said second end portion includes an anchor portion having a first face and a second face opposite to the first face;

the first face having an upstanding wall with a first aperture providing access to a tunnel and a generally cylindrical shaped anchor projecting upward therefrom, and a flange around the base of said anchor, said anchor having a continuous groove around its sidewall and a domed top;

the second face being substantially smooth, wherein said first portion includes a ring portion having a first face and a second face opposite to the first face;

said ring portion forming a ring with its hollow portion

oriented such that an axis passing through a center of the hollow portion is perpendicular to a longitudinal axis of the one-piece elastic body, said ring portion having an elongate projection with a rounded tip projecting from a side thereof in the direction of the longitudinal axis,

wherein said body portion has end portions that taper in both side and top views, said body portion having a longitudinal groove running along a portion of its length and a second aperture providing access to the tunnel,

wherein the first face of the ring portion and the first face of the anchor portion are on a first side of the one-piece elastic body, and the second face of the ring portion and the second face of the anchor portion are on a second side of the one-piece elastic body,

wherein the side of said ring portion from which the elongate projection extends is 180 degrees offset from the juncture where said ring portion and said elongate body meet, and

wherein said ring portion and said anchor portion are sized to be arranged as follows when said ring portion and said anchor portion are properly coupled:

the ring of said ring portion elastically fits around the groove of the anchor such that the hollow portion is taken up by the anchor, and on the side of the second face of said ring portion, the ring rests on the flange; and

the elongate projection with a rounded tip is inside the tunnel, extending through the first aperture, while being visible through the second aperture in a bottom view of the one-piece elastic body, but without projecting from a plane defining the second aperture.

12. The fastening device according to claim **11**, wherein said fastening device is one such device in a set of said fastening devices, the set including at least two of said fastening devices.

13. The fastening device according to claim **12**, wherein the set of said fastening devices includes at least two fastening devices each with different overall lengths.

14. The fastening device according to claim 12, wherein the set of said fastening devices includes at least two fastening devices each with a same overall lengths.

15. The fastening device according to claim 11, wherein said flange completely surrounds the base of said anchor portion.

16. A fastening method comprising:

providing an elastic device for fastening, the elastic device including:

a. first portion defining a ring and having a flexible elongate projection as an extremity of the device; and

a second portion coupled to said first portion and having a wall with a protrusion extending therefrom and defining a first opening which provides access to a tunnel formed by said second portion; and

arranging said device by coupling together said first portion and said second portion,

wherein said arranging includes placement of the ring of the first portion around the protrusion of the second portion such that the interior of the ring surrounds the protrusion and such that the flexible elongate projection of the first portion fits inside the tunnel via the first opening.

17. The method of claim 16, further comprising: before said arranging step, inserting the elastic device into a pair of holes, eyelets, loops, or hooks of an item.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the item is one of apparel, footwear, luggage, a backpack, a bag, a purse, a boxing glove, a punching bag, and football or lacrosse shoulder pads.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein the elastic device includes a portion that is phosphorescent and/or a portion that flashes.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein said providing includes forming said elastic device by injection molding.

21. The method of claim 16, wherein the protrusion of the second portion includes on its upper face, which is visible and not concealed when the first and second portions are coupled together, a removable and replaceable portion, the removable and replaceable portion being removable and replaceable to change a color configuration of the device and/or to change a logo or other indicia on the upper face of the protrusion.

22. An elongated elastic device for fastening an article, said elastic device comprising:

a first portion defining a ring and having a flexible elongate projection as an extremity thereof;

a second portion coupled to said first portion, said second portion including a wall with a protrusion extending therefrom, said wall defining a first opening which provides access to a tunnel formed by said second portion; and

an elongated connecting portion for coupling together said first portion and said second portion;

wherein said first portion is configured to be positioned around said protrusion of said second portion such that an interior of said ring surrounds said protrusion and such that said flexible elongate projection of said first portion fits inside said tunnel via said first opening.

23. The device according to claim 22, wherein said elastic device is inserted into a pair of holes, eyelets, loops, or hooks of an article.

24. The device according to claim 23, wherein said article is selected from the group consisting of apparel, footwear, luggage, a backpack, a bag, a purse, a boxing glove, a punching bag, and football or lacrosse shoulder pads.

25. The device according to claim 22, said elastic device further comprising a portion that is phosphorescent or a portion that flashes.

26. The device according to claim 22, wherein said elastic device is formed by injection molding.

27. The device according to claim 22, wherein said protrusion includes on an upper face a removable and replaceable portion, said removable and replaceable portion being removable and replaceable to change an appearance of said upper face of said second portion, wherein said upper face is visible when said first and second portions are coupled together.

28. The device according to claim 22, wherein the protrusion in plan view is one of oval, circular, rectangular, or square, and wherein the inside of the ring in plan view is one of circular, oval, rectangular, or square.