

1 **TITLE:** TRAVEL PILLOW

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6 **CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

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8 This application claims the benefit of US Provisional Patent Application 61/623,545,
9 filed on April 12, 2012, and US Utility Patent Application 13/488,443, filed on June
10 4, 2012, both incorporated herein by reference.

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13 **FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

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15 This invention relates to pillows, and more particularly to a travel pillow.

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18 **DISCUSSION OF RELATED ART**

19

20 A pillow generally provides support for the head and neck, typically in a laying
21 position. A travel pillow, conversely, is designed to provide support for the head and
22 neck while seated, as is common during long automobile, train, and airplane trips. A
23 travel pillow is generally "U" shaped and is adapted to fit around the neck of a person.
24 A travel pillow can prevent neck strain and promote comfort by supporting a person's
25 neck and head vertically.

1
2 U.S. Patent No. 6,230,349 to Silver et al. on May 15th, 2001, describes a travel pillow
3 having a compact size and U-shape for cradling the head and neck of a user while
4 sitting. This device is adapted to allow the user to allow or remove fill material in
5 order to adjust firmness. While this invention is capable of providing neck support, it
6 does not provide adequate neck support in left, right, and forward positions.
7 Furthermore, this travel pillow will force the person's head forward, causing neck
8 strain, as there is no support in the front. The lobes, moreover, are not tall enough,
9 and the lobes will split out if one's head falls left or right.
10
11 U.S. Patent No. 4,345,347 to Kantor on August 24th, 1982, describes a cushion
12 having a U-shaped portion for supporting the head and neck of a user while sitting.
13 This device is adapted to accept a sleeve to cover parts of the cushion that will touch
14 skin or hair, and includes weights for balancing the device on the shoulders. While
15 this invention is capable of providing neck support, it does not provide adequate neck
16 support in left, right, and forward positions and is not adapted to prevent an extreme
17 forward head position.
18
19 U.S. Patent No. 98,859 to Fast on January 18th, 1870, describes a travel pillow having
20 a cushion for promoting the comfort of passengers while traveling. This device
21 comprises an inflatable semi-circular cushion and a strap adapted to form the cushion
22 around the neck by applying downward force with the arms. While this invention is
23 capable of providing neck support, it does not provide adequate neck support in left,
24 right, and forward positions and is not adapted to prevent an extreme forward head
25 position.

1
2 While several travel pillows exist in the prior art, few provide adequate support for
3 alternative head positions. Furthermore, travel pillows are notorious for forcing the
4 head forward, causing neck strain. Finally, current travel pillows do not adequately
5 support a front position due to the gap of the "U" shape. Therefore, there is a need for
6 a travel pillow that can provide adequate neck support for all head positions without
7 causing undue strain. Furthermore, a need exists for a travel pillow that will not force
8 the head forward in a rearward position. The present invention accomplishes these
9 objectives.

10 11 12 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

13
14 The present invention discloses a travel pillow comprising a U-shaped, pliable base
15 cushion with a second U-shaped raised cushion fixed to the top side of the base
16 cushion. The inner peripheral walls of the base and raised cushions are mutually
17 flush, providing a comfortable surface for the neck. Furthermore, the rear walls of the
18 base and raised cushions are mutually flush and substantially flat for better contact
19 with flat surfaces, such as a headrest, seat, or chair. The rear wall of the raised
20 cushion is thinner than each side portion of the raised cushion, providing more liberty
21 to adjust head position by easily adapting to the shape of the headrest, seat or chair. A
22 removable cover is adapted to cover the base and raised cushions. The cover may
23 further be reversible, where the outside of the cover has a contrasting appearance to
24 the inside of the cover. The pillow is ergonomically designed to fit behind the neck

1 and head of a person, lining the back of the head and neck up with a seat and not
2 pushing the person's head forward.

3
4 The raised cushion is ergonomically designed to comfortably fit around the neck
5 without causing undue strain. Furthermore, the raised cushion is adapted to prevent
6 interfere with a person wearing headphones. Pockets can be positioned on the outside
7 and bottom of the base cushion for storing electronic devices and other objects. A
8 drawstring with an adjustable cinch mechanism can be used for adjusting the travel
9 pillow around the neck. The cinch mechanism also keeps the pillow in place,
10 prevents the lobes from splitting outward, and conforms the pillow around one's neck.
11 Further, the cinch mechanism allows attachment of the pillow around a bag handle or
12 strap for hands-free transport.

13
14 The U-shape of the travel pillow is generally intended to provide support to the head
15 while traveling. As such, the base cushion and raised cushions are integrally formed
16 from a memory foam material adapted to fit securely, yet comfortably, around the
17 neck, providing adequate ergonomic support to the head when seated in an upright
18 position. The travel pillow can be shaped like an animal, character, or sports team
19 logo.

20
21 The present device is a travel pillow that can provide adequate neck support for all
22 head positions without causing undue strain. Furthermore, a need exists for a travel
23 pillow that will not force the head forward in a rearward position. Other features and
24 advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following more

1 detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which
2 illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

3 4 5 **DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

6
7 FIG. 1 is a perspective view one embodiment of the invention;

8 FIG. 2 is a front elevational view thereof, a drawstring illustrated in FIG. 1 omitted
9 for clarity of illustration;

10 FIG. 3 is a rear elevational view of an alternate embodiment of the invention;

11 FIG. 4 is a top plan view of the embodiment of FIG. 1;

12 FIG. 5 is a left-side elevational view of the embodiment of FIG. 1, the drawstring
13 omitted for clarity of illustration; and

14 FIG. 6 is a bottom plan view of another embodiment of the invention, the drawstring
15 omitted for clarity of illustration.

16 17 18 **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

19
20 Illustrative embodiments of the invention are described below. The following
21 explanation provides specific details for a thorough understanding of and enabling
22 description for these embodiments. One skilled in the art will understand that the
23 invention may be practiced without such details. In other instances, well-known
24 structures and functions have not been shown or described in detail to avoid
25 unnecessarily obscuring the description of the embodiments.

1
2 Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, throughout the description and the
3 claims, the words "comprise," "comprising," and the like are to be construed in an
4 inclusive sense as opposed to an exclusive or exhaustive sense; that is to say, in the
5 sense of "including, but not limited to." Words using the singular or plural number
6 also include the plural or singular number respectively. Additionally, the words
7 "herein," "above," "below" and words of similar import, when used in this
8 application, shall refer to this application as a whole and not to any particular portions
9 of this application. When the claims use the word "or" in reference to a list of two or
10 more items, that word covers all of the following interpretations of the word: any of
11 the items in the list, all of the items in the list and any combination of the items in the
12 list.

13
14 FIGS. 1 and 2 illustrate a travel pillow 10 comprising a U-shaped, pliable base
15 cushion 20 having a top side 28, bottom side 22, outer peripheral wall 29, inner
16 peripheral wall 21, rear wall 27, and a pair of opposing front walls 23. A U-shaped
17 raised cushion 30 is fixed to the top side 28 of the base cushion 20. The raised
18 cushion 30 comprises a top side 38, bottom side 32, outer peripheral wall 39, and
19 inner peripheral wall 31, all defining a rear portion 37 and two opposing side portions
20 35 of the raised cushion 30 (FIG. 4). The inner peripheral walls 21, 31 of the base
21 and raised cushions 20, 30 are mutually flush, providing a comfortable surface for the
22 neck.

23
24 The top side 38 of the base cushion 20 is substantially flat, while the top side 38 of the
25 raised cushion 30 is curved (FIG. 2) or flat (FIG. 3) between the inner and outer

1 peripheral walls 31, 39 thereof. The rear walls 27, 37 of the base and raised cushions
2 20, 30 are mutually flush (FIG. 4) and substantially flat for better contact with flat
3 surfaces, such as a headrest or chair (not shown). Furthermore, the outer peripheral
4 wall 39 of the raised portion 30 may extend higher than the inner peripheral wall 31 of
5 the opposing side portions 35 (FIG. 2), while the outer and inner peripheral walls 39,
6 31 of the rear portion 37 are substantially the same height. The rear wall 37 of the
7 raised cushion 30 is thinner than each side portion 35 (FIG. 4), providing more liberty
8 to adjust head position by easily adapting to the shape of the headrest, seat or chair.

9
10 A selectively removable fabric cover 40 is adapted to cover the base and raised
11 cushions 20,30, and includes an opening 50 at a bottom side 42 thereof (FIG. 5). In
12 one embodiment, the fabric cover 40 is reversible, where a first side 41 of the cover
13 40 has a contrasting appearance to a second side 42 (FIG. 1) of the cover 40. In an
14 alternative embodiment, the base cushion 20 and the raised cushion 30 are selectively
15 mutually detachable (FIG. 3) at a first attachment mechanism 130, such as a zipper
16 (not shown), two-part hook-and-loop type material 150, button, and/or mechanical
17 snap 160. As such, the fabric cover 40 is adapted to cover the base cushion 20, while
18 a second fabric cover 140 (FIG. 3) is adapted to cover the raised cushion 30. The
19 fabric cover 40 may be machine washable, so as to allow for cleaning of the cover 40
20 from sweat or other grime.

21
22 The raised cushion 30 includes a pair of opposing recesses 90 (FIG. 1) or semi-
23 circular cut-outs (not shown) on the inner peripheral wall 31 of each side portion 35,
24 whereby the raised cushion 30 does not interfere with a person wearing headphones.
25 Furthermore, the outer peripheral wall 29 of the base cushion 20 includes at least one

1 pocket 100 for holding an item 15. In an alternative embodiment, the bottom side 22
2 (FIG. 6) of the base cushion 20 further includes at least one pocket 120 for receiving a
3 second item 16.

4
5 The travel pillow 10 can be used in a first position, where the user can lay his head
6 back on the device 10, or a second position 180-degrees rotated, where the user's chin
7 is supported at a chin support 170 (FIG. 1). Clearly the user can rotate the travel
8 pillow 10 to any suitable and comfortably position as needed, the raised cushion 30
9 providing varying heights of support to the user's neck and chin. To provide more
10 customization, a drawstring 60 is adapted to adjust the fitting of the travel pillow 10
11 around the neck. The drawstring 60 has opposing ends 65, each end fixed proximate
12 one of the front walls 23 of the base cushion 20.

13
14 The drawstring 60 further comprises an adjustable cinch mechanism 70 for adjusting
15 the tension in the drawstring 60. The cinch mechanism 70 may be adjusted until the
16 front peripheral walls 23 of the base cushion 20 are brought into mutual contact. As
17 such, the travel pillow 10 may be further used as a massage pillow wherein the raised
18 cushion 30 supports the user's face while allowing the user to breathe freely and lay
19 on his stomach. Alternately, the travel pillow 10 in such a configuration may be used
20 as a so-called "massage" or "sun tanning" support for a user's face or the back of the
21 user's head, respectively, while laying either face-down or face-up on a surface.

22
23 The U-shape of the travel pillow 10 is generally intended to providing support to the
24 head while traveling. As such, the base cushion 20 and raised cushion 30, in one
25 embodiment, are integrally formed from a foam material 110 adapted to fit securely,

1 yet comfortably, around the neck, providing adequate ergonomic support to the head
2 when seated in an upright position. In the preferred embodiment, the foam material
3 110 is a memory foam material, with the device 10 having overall dimensions of 10”
4 x 10” x 5”, although any suitable material and size may be used. Other materials
5 include fabrics, air, beads, polyester, grains, aromatherapy material, gels, and other
6 fluids.

7
8 While a particular form of the invention has been illustrated and described, it will be
9 apparent that various modifications can be made without departing from the spirit and
10 scope of the invention. For example, an electrical heating and massaging device may
11 be incorporated to provide heat and massage to the neck. Additionally, the travel
12 pillow 10 may be shaped like an animal, cartoon character, sports team logo, or other
13 novelty shape. Accordingly, it is not intended that the invention be limited, except as
14 by the appended claims.

15
16 Particular terminology used when describing certain features or aspects of the
17 invention should not be taken to imply that the terminology is being redefined herein
18 to be restricted to any specific characteristics, features, or aspects of the invention
19 with which that terminology is associated. In general, the terms used in the following
20 claims should not be construed to limit the invention to the specific embodiments
21 disclosed in the specification, unless the above Detailed Description section explicitly
22 defines such terms. Accordingly, the actual scope of the invention encompasses not
23 only the disclosed embodiments, but also all equivalent ways of practicing or
24 implementing the invention.

1 The above detailed description of the embodiments of the invention is not intended to
2 be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise form disclosed above or to the
3 particular field of usage mentioned in this disclosure. While specific embodiments of,
4 and examples for, the invention are described above for illustrative purposes, various
5 equivalent modifications are possible within the scope of the invention, as those
6 skilled in the relevant art will recognize. Also, the teachings of the invention
7 provided herein can be applied to other systems, not necessarily the system described
8 above. The elements and acts of the various embodiments described above can be
9 combined to provide further embodiments.

10
11 All of the above patents and applications and other references, including any that may
12 be listed in accompanying filing papers, are incorporated herein by reference.
13 Aspects of the invention can be modified, if necessary, to employ the systems,
14 functions, and concepts of the various references described above to provide yet
15 further embodiments of the invention.

16
17 Changes can be made to the invention in light of the above "Detailed Description."
18 While the above description details certain embodiments of the invention and
19 describes the best mode contemplated, no matter how detailed the above appears in
20 text, the invention can be practiced in many ways. Therefore, implementation details
21 may vary considerably while still being encompassed by the invention disclosed
22 herein. As noted above, particular terminology used when describing certain features
23 or aspects of the invention should not be taken to imply that the terminology is being

1 redefined herein to be restricted to any specific characteristics, features, or aspects of
2 the invention with which that terminology is associated.

3

4 While certain aspects of the invention are presented below in certain claim forms, the
5 inventor contemplates the various aspects of the invention in any number of claim
6 forms. Accordingly, the inventor reserves the right to add additional claims after
7 filing the application to pursue such additional claim forms for other aspects of the
8 invention.

9

1 **CLAIMS**

2

3 What is claimed is:

4

5 1. A travel pillow comprising:

6

7 a U-shaped, pliable base cushion having a top side, a bottom side, an outer
8 peripheral wall, an inner peripheral wall, a pair of opposing front walls, and a rear
9 wall;

10 a U-shaped raised cushion having a top side, a bottom side, an outer peripheral
11 wall, an inner peripheral wall, all defining a rear portion and two opposing side
12 portions of the raised cushion, the raised cushion fixed with the top side of the base
13 cushion, the rear wall of the raised cushion being thinner than each side portion of the
14 raised cushion; and

15 a selectively removable fabric cover adapted to cover the base and raised
16 cushions and including an opening at a bottom side thereof;

17 wherein the rear walls of the base and raised cushions are mutually flush and
18 substantially flat.

19

20 2. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the outer peripheral wall of the raised cushion
21 extends higher than the inner peripheral wall of the raised cushion.

22

23 3. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the inner peripheral walls of the base and
24 raised cushions are mutually flush.

25

- 1 4. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the top side of the raised cushion is
2 substantially flat.
3
- 4 5. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the top side of the raised cushion is curved
5 between the inner and outer peripheral walls thereof.
6
- 7 6. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the top side of the raised cushion is sloped
8 between the inner and outer peripheral walls thereof.
9
- 10 7. The travel pillow of claim 1 further including a drawstring having opposing ends,
11 each end fixed proximate one of the front walls of the base cushion, the drawstring
12 including an adjustable cinch mechanism for adjusting the tension in the drawstring.
13
- 14 8. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the raised cushion includes a pair of opposing
15 recesses on the inner peripheral wall of each side portion, whereby the raised cushion
16 does not interfere with a person wearing headphones.
17
- 18 9. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the outer peripheral wall of the base cushion
19 includes at least one pocket for holding an item.
20
- 21 10. The travel pillow of claim 7 wherein the cinch mechanism of the drawstring may
22 be adjusted until the front peripheral walls of the base cushion are brought into mutual
23 contact.
24

- 1 11. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the base cushion and raised cushions are
2 integrally formed from a foam material.
3
- 4 12. The travel pillow of claim 11 wherein the foam material is a memory foam
5 material.
6
- 7 13. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the bottom side of the base cushion includes
8 a pocket for receiving a second item.
9
- 10 14. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the fabric cover is reversible, the wherein a
11 first side of the cover has a contrasting appearance to a second side of the cover.
12
- 13 15. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the base cushion and the raised cushion are
14 selectively mutually detachable at an attachment mechanism, and wherein the fabric
15 cover is adapted to cover the base cushion, and wherein a second fabric cover is
16 adapted to cover the raised cushion.
17
- 18 16. The travel pillow of claim 15 wherein the attachment mechanism includes a two-
19 part hook-and-loop type fastening material.
20
- 21 17. The travel pillow of claim 15 wherein the attachment mechanism includes at least
22 one mechanical snap.
23
- 24 18. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the raised cushion is ergonomically shaped
25 to support the head and neck without strain.

1
2 19. The travel pillow of claim 1 wherein the rear wall is substantially flat.
3