CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An upper of an article of footwear comprising:

a foot receiving shoe opening;

a U-shaped foamed ankle collar that is substantially tubular in shape;

the ankle collar forming the topmost region of the foot receiving shoe opening; the foamed ankle collar extending at least partially around and over the foot receiving shoe opening;

the ankle collar capable of being compressed by the user's heel during foot insertion and wherein the ankle collar may exert pressure on the user's ankle once the foot is inserted; and

the ankle collar having a flattened region along its length forming a downward angle from the topmost region toward the front of the article of footwear; and

wherein the cross-sectional shape of the ankle collar has a first portion and a second portion; the first portion being approximately a semicircle with a first radius; the second portion being approximately a semicircle with a second radius; and wherein the first radius is greater than the second radius.

2. The upper of claim 1, wherein the lower portion of the ankle collar has an attachment piece affixed to the upper.

3. The upper of any one of the preceding claims, wherein the heel cup has a first configuration; the heel cup capable of distorting into a second configuration under a load of a user's foot when the user is donning the footwear; and the heel cup is capable of automatically returning to the first configuration after the user's foot in fully inserted into the footwear.

4. The upper of claim 1, wherein the lower portion of the ankle collar has an attachment piece affixed to the upper;

the heel cup having an upper portion that extends rearward with an inclined surface capable of receiving a foot;

the heel cup having a first configuration;

the heel cup capable of distorting into a second configuration under a load of a user's foot when the user is donning the footwear;

the heel cup capable of automatically returning to the first configuration after the user's foot in fully inserted into the footwear; and the ankle collar located along at least a portion of the heel cup.

5. The upper of claim 4, wherein the cross-sectional shape of the ankle collar has a first portion and a second portion; the first portion being approximately a semicircle with a first radius; the second portion being approximately a semicircle with a second radius; and wherein the first radius is greater than the second radius.

6. The upper of claim 4 or claim 5, wherein the heel cup defines a peripheral portion a central portion; the peripheral portion having a first thickness; the first thickness defining the maximum thickness of the heel cup; the central portion having a second thickness; the second thickness defining the minimum thickness of the heel cup; and the first thickness decreasing gradually to the second thickness in a direction extending from the peripheral portion to the central portion.

7. The upper of any one of claims 4 to 6, wherein portions of the ankle collar are located along the inner surface of the compressible portions of the heel cup.

8. An upper of an article of footwear comprising:

a foot receiving shoe opening;

a U-shaped foamed ankle collar that is substantially tubular in shape;

the ankle collar forming the topmost region of the foot receiving shoe opening;

the foamed ankle collar extending at least partially around and over the foot receiving shoe opening;

the ankle collar capable of being compressed by the user's heel during foot insertion and wherein the ankle collar may exert pressure on the user's ankle once the foot is inserted;

the ankle collar having a flattened region along its length forming a downward angle from the topmost region toward the front of the article of footwear; and

the ankle collar located along at least a portion of an inner surface of a heel cup;

the heel cup configured to have a shoe-horn like configuration; and wherein

the ankle collar reduces the dimensions of the shoe opening when not compressed, and

wherein the cross-sectional shape of the ankle collar has a first portion and a second portion; the first portion being approximately a semicircle with a first radius; the second portion being approximately a semicircle with a second radius; and wherein the first radius is greater than the second radius.

9. An upper of an article of footwear comprising:

a foot receiving shoe opening;

a U-shaped foamed ankle collar that is substantially tubular in shape;

the ankle collar forming the topmost region of the foot receiving shoe opening;

the foamed ankle collar extending at least partially around and over the foot receiving shoe opening;

the ankle collar capable of being compressed by the user's heel during foot insertion and wherein the ankle collar may exert pressure on the user's ankle once the foot is inserted;

the ankle collar having a flattened region along its length forming a downward angle from the topmost region toward the front of the article of footwear;

a heel cup having an upper portion that extends rearward with an inclined surface capable of receiving a foot;

the heel cup having a first configuration;

the heel cup capable of distorting into a second configuration under a load of a user's foot when the user is donning the footwear; and the heel cup capable of automatically returning to the first configuration after the user's foot is fully inserted into the footwear; and

the ankle collar located along at least a portion of the heel cup, and

wherein the cross-sectional shape of the ankle collar has a first portion and a second portion; the first portion being approximately a semicircle with a first radius; the second portion being approximately a semicircle with a second radius; and wherein the first radius is greater than the second radius.