

ROTATING JOINT FOR CROSSBAR LEVELING ADJUSTMENT

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the benefit of and priority to U.S. Patent Application No. 17/876,912, filed on July 29, 2022, which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

[0002] With computer monitors become increasingly ubiquitous at work and home, individuals are spending ever greater portions of their waking hours viewing monitors. This means highly customizable adjustment of a monitor's position is necessary to reduce the strain of viewing monitors for long periods. Figure 1 illustrates a convention monitor stand 100 supporting a monitor 101. Monitor stand 100 includes base 102, upright 103, and monitor mounting bracket 104. Figure 1 suggests how monitor stand 100 allows monitor 101 to be adjusted with four degrees of freedom: (1) height in a vertical direction along upright 103, (2) swivel of upright 103 with respect to base 102, (3) tilt of monitor top and bottom edge toward and away from the user; and (4) pivot of the monitor in a plane containing the monitor. "Vertical" or "vertical direction" as used herein means a direction parallel to Earth's gravitational force. While a single monitor stand such as seen in Figure 1 can adequately provide these four degrees of freedom, providing this degree of adjustability becomes more difficult as stands are expected to support two, three, or possibly more monitors.

SUMMARY

[0003] One embodiment of the invention is a monitor mounting system which includes a crossbar having at least one monitor mounting bracket positioned thereon. A support arm is configured to adjust the vertical height of the crossbar and a pivot assembly is positioned between the support arm and the crossbar, with the pivot assembly configured to allow limited pivot adjustment of the crossbar in order to level the crossbar to the horizontal position.

[0004] The above summary is not intended to describe each illustrated embodiment or every possible implementation. These and other features, aspects, and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with regard to the following description, appended claims, and accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] The accompanying figures, where like reference numerals refer to identical or functionally similar elements throughout the separate views, which are not true to scale, and which, together with the detailed description below, are incorporated in and form part of the specification, serve to illustrate further various embodiments and to explain various principles

and advantages in accordance with the present invention:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a prior art monitor stand.

Figure 2 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 3A is a perspective view of one embodiment of the pivot assembly.

Figure 3B is a cross-sectional view of the pivot assembly of Figure 3A.

Figure 4A is an exploded view of the pivot assembly from a first direction.

Figure 4B is an exploded view of the pivot assembly from an opposing direction.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0006] Detailed embodiments of the present invention are disclosed herein; however, it is to be understood that the disclosed embodiments are merely exemplary of the invention, which can be embodied in various forms. Therefore, specific structural and functional details disclosed herein are not to be interpreted as limiting, but merely as a basis for the claims and as a representative basis for teaching one skilled in the art to variously employ the present invention in virtually any appropriately detailed structure. Alternate embodiments may be devised without departing from the spirit or the scope of the invention. Further, the terms and phrases used herein are not intended to be limiting; but rather, to provide an understandable description of the invention. While the specification concludes with claims defining the features of the invention that are regarded as novel, it is believed that the invention will be better understood from a consideration of the following description in conjunction with the drawing figures, in which like reference numerals are carried forward.

[0007] As used herein, the terms “a” or “an” are defined as one or more than one. The term “plurality,” as used herein, is defined as two or more than two. The term “another,” as used herein, is defined as at least a second or more. The terms “comprises,” “comprising,” or any other variation thereof are intended to cover a non-exclusive inclusion, such that a process, method, article, or apparatus that comprises a list of elements does not include only those elements, but may include other elements not expressly listed or inherent to such process, method, article, or apparatus. An element preceded by “comprises ... a” does not, without more constraints, preclude the existence of additional identical elements in the process, method, article, or apparatus that comprises the element. The terms “including,” “having,” or “featuring,” as used herein, are defined as comprising (i.e., open language). The term “coupled,” as used herein, is defined as connected, although not necessarily directly, and not necessarily mechanically. As used herein, the term “about” or “approximately” applies to all numeric values, whether or not explicitly indicated. These terms generally refer to a range of numbers that one of skill in the art would consider equivalent to the recited values (i.e., having

the same function or result). In many instances these terms may include numbers that are rounded to the nearest significant figure. Where a numerical limitation is used, unless indicated otherwise by the context, “about” or “approximately” means the numerical value can vary by +/-5%, +/-10%, or in certain embodiments +/-15%, or possibly as much as +/-20%. Similarly, the term “substantially” will typically mean at least 85% to 99% of the characteristic modified by the term. For example, “substantially all” will mean at least 85%, at least 90%, or at least 95%, etc. Relational terms such as first and second, top and bottom, right and left, and the like may be used solely to distinguish one entity or action from another entity or action without necessarily requiring or implying any actual such relationship or order between such entities or actions.

[0008] Described now are exemplary embodiments of the present invention. Figure 2 illustrates one embodiment of the present invention, tilt adjustable monitor crossbar assembly 1, sometimes referred to simply as monitor mounting system 1. In this embodiment, the monitor mounting assembly 1 most generally includes a crossbar 5, a support arm 15, and a pivot assembly or pivot link 25 connected between crossbar 5 and support arm 15. In the Figure 2 embodiment, crossbar 5 includes three crossbar segments 6a, 6b, and 6c, with hinges 7 connecting the interior ends of crossbar segments 6a and 6c to crossbar segment 6b and allowing for crossbar segments 6a and 6c to swing inward toward one another as suggested in Figure 2. Typically, each crossbar segment 6 will have a monitor mounting bracket 10 attached thereto. In Figure 2, the monitor mounting brackets include a mounting face 11 for attachment to the monitor and a hinged connection or tilt connector 12 allowing for altering of the tilt position of the monitor with respect to its crossbar segment 6. Although Figure 2 illustrates a crossbar 5 formed of multiple hinged segments, other embodiments could employ a single segment crossbar.

[0009] Figure 2 further shows the support arm 15 which is connected to the support surface 90 (e.g., a work desk) and suspends crossbar 5 via pivot assembly 25 above support surface 90. Although support arm 15 could be almost any conventional or future developed support mechanism, the Figure 2 embodiment illustrates a support arm available from Humanscale Corporation under the tradenames M8.1 and M10. Although not shown in Figure 2, another arm may be positioned between the support surface and the base swivel connection 16 of support arm 15. The base swivel connection 16 will allow the support arm to rotate in the swivel direction and also an upper swivel fork 17 will operate in conjunction with the pivot assembly 25 to create a second swivel point. In the example of M8.1 or M10 support arms, the support arms include a weight compensating spring system which allows for change of the vertical position of support arm 15 (i.e., change of the vertical height of crossbar 5) while the

user experiences little or no change in the force needed to adjust the height of the monitors mounted on crossbar 5. The construction and operation of the illustrated support arm 15 is more fully described in U.S. Patent No. 10,480,709 which is incorporated by reference herein.

[0010] As suggested above, pivot assembly 25 provides the connection between crossbar 5 and support arm 15. Figures 3A to 4B illustrate one embodiment of pivot assembly 25. This embodiment of pivot assembly 25 will generally include pivot housing 26 which is integrally formed on one end with swivel ring 50 and is engaged on the opposite end by pivot core 35. Swivel ring 50 will include two bearing inserts 51 (best seen in Figure 4B). Bearing inserts 51 may be formed of a low friction material such as polyoxymethylene (POM), also known as acetal, polyacetal, or polyformaldehyde. A pin (not shown) with an alignment key will extend through the upper swivel fork 17 of support arm 15 (see Figure 2) and complete the swivel connection between swivel fork 17 and swivel ring 50. The bearing flexures 52 allow for a controlled precision fit between a rotation pin (not shown) and the contact surface of bearing inserts 51.

[0011] As best seen in Figure 4B, pivot housing 26 is mainly a hollow body with internal threads 27 formed on the inner surface of pivot housing 26. A threaded set screw aperture 29 extends through the housing wall to accommodate set screw 30 which has sufficient length to extend into internal rotation surface of pivot core 35. The face of pivot housing 26 to which swivel ring 50 attaches (see Figure 3B) includes the limit screw apertures 28 extending through this face, into the interior of pivot housing 26, and then into a controlled rotary slots (or “pivot slots”) 37 in pivot core 35.

[0012] The internal threads 27 of pivot housing 26 will be engaged by the external threads 36 of pivot core 35 with set screw 30 able to engage external threads 36 in order to selectively lock the relative rotative positions between pivot housing 26 and pivot core 35. As seen in Figure 3B, pivot core 35 includes the controlled rotary slots 37 formed on the inner face of pivot core 35. Pivot core 35 also includes friction pin aperture 38 extending through pivot core 35 and a series of crossbar mounting lug apertures 39 (better seen in Figure 4B) formed in the external face of pivot core 35. As best seen viewing Figures 3B and 4A, the motion control plate (sometimes called an “anti-rotation plate”) 40 and the compression plate 43 are positioned between the inner faces of pivot housing 26 and pivot core 35. Figure 4A shows how the elliptically shaped motion control plate 40 will include opposing circumferential cutouts 41 and a plate groove or plate inset 44, which does not extend completely through motion control plate 40 and is shaped to accommodate compression plate 43. Figure 3B best shows how motion control plate 40 and compression plate 43 are sandwiched between the inner faces of pivot housing 26 and pivot core 35. The plate inset 44 will ensure there is no relative movement

between motion control plate 40 and compression plate 43. In one preferred embodiment, motion control plate 40 is formed of polyurethane foam and compression plate 43 is formed of acrylonitrile butadiene styrene. Angle limit screws 47 will extend through pivot housing 26, the circumferential cutouts 41 in motion control plate 40, and into the controlled rotary slots 37 of pivot core 35.

[0013] Viewing Figure 4A, it can be envisioned how angle limit screws 47 will allow a limited relative rotation between pivot housing 26 and pivot core 35 based on the angular width of controlled rotary slots 37 and circumferential cutouts 41 (at least when set screw 30 is not engaging external threads 36 of pivot core 35). The resulting degree of pivot imparted to crossbar 5 is suggested by the angle θ seen in Figure 2. The angle θ represents the degree of tilt (in one direction) of crossbar 5 relative to the swivel ring 50 fixed against tilt by upper swivel fork 17 of support arm 15. The maximum pivot of crossbar 5 (pivot in both directions) would be 2θ . In certain embodiments, the width of controlled rotary slots 37 and circumferential cutouts 41 are only wide enough to allow a maximum pivot of less than 15 degrees ($\theta = 7.5$ degrees or less), and more preferably a maximum pivot of 8 degrees ($\theta = 4$ degrees or less), between pivot housing 26 and pivot core 35. Returning to Figure 3B, it may also be envisioned how the compression screw 45 engages motion control plate 40 and will tend to compress compression plate 43 against the inner face of pivot housing 26. It will be understood that advancing compression screw 45 into motion control plate 40 will increase the amount of torque necessary to cause rotation between pivot housing 26 and pivot core 35. In addition to enhancing friction within the system, motion control plate 40 provides a locating feature for assembly of the system.

[0014] Viewing Figure 2, with compression screw 45 applying moderate force to compression plate 43, a user will be allowed to finely adjust the pivot position of crossbar 5 by applying moderate force to the outer monitors and overcoming the friction generated by compression plate 43 and motion control plate 40. However, when the user ceases applying force to the monitors, the friction is sufficient to resist the weight of the monitors correcting the user induced pivot. Thereafter, set screw 30 may be tightened to engage external threads 36 on pivot core 35 in order to more firmly lock the pivot position of crossbar 5. The use of compression screw 45 may be particularly useful when heavier monitors are being mounted, but there could be alternative embodiments which do not employ a compression screw 45. Similarly, while many embodiments employ motion control plate 40 and compression plate 43 to enhance the friction resisting free pivot motion of the crossbar, there could be alternative embodiments which eliminate motion control plate 40 and compression plate 43.

[0015] The foregoing description and accompanying drawings illustrate the principles, exemplary embodiments, and modes of operation of the invention. However, the invention should not be construed as being limited to the particular embodiments discussed above. Many modifications of the embodiments described herein will come to mind to one skilled in the art having the benefit of the teaching presented in the foregoing descriptions and the associated drawings. Accordingly, it should be appreciated that variations to those embodiments can be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A monitor mounting system comprising:
 - a) a crossbar having at least one monitor mounting bracket positioned thereon, the monitor mounting bracket being attached to the crossbar with a tilt connector;
 - b) a support arm configured to adjust the vertical height of the crossbar, wherein the support arm is a dynamic support arm including an internal elastomeric member configured to allow the support arm to move through approximately an entire range of motion with application of approximately constant force to the support arm;
 - c) a pivot assembly positioned between the support arm and the crossbar, wherein the pivot assembly comprises:
 - (i) a pivot assembly housing;
 - (ii) a swivel ring attached to an exterior of the pivot assembly housing;
 - and
 - (iii) a pivot stop positioned in the pivot assembly housing and limiting pivot adjustment to fifteen or fewer degrees in each pivot direction.
2. The monitor mounting system of claim 1, wherein (i) the pivot assembly housing includes a pivot core threading into the pivot assembly housing, and (ii) the pivot stop includes a motion control plate engaging anti-rotation pins.
3. The monitor mounting system of claim 2, wherein the pivot assembly further includes a compression friction plate positioned within the pivot assembly housing and a threaded compression pin configured to impart force to the compression friction plate.
4. The monitor mounting system of claim 2, wherein the motion control plate is an approximately circular plate with opposing circumferential cutouts, wherein the circumferential cutouts have an arc of less than fifteen degrees.
5. The monitor mounting system of claim 2, wherein an outer face of the pivot core includes at least two threaded apertures configured to receive mounting screws.
6. The monitor mounting system of claim 1, wherein the swivel ring further includes two bearing inserts.
7. The monitor mounting system of claim 1, wherein the support arm is a dynamic support arm including an internal elastomeric member configured to allow the support arm to move through approximately an entire range of motion with application of approximately constant force to the support arm.

8. The monitor mounting system of claim 1, wherein the crossbar has at least two monitor mounting brackets positioned thereon and the monitor mounting brackets are attached to the crossbar with a tilt connector.
9. The monitor mounting system of claim 8, wherein the crossbar includes a central segment and two outer segments which form hinge connections to the central segment.
10. A monitor mounting system comprising:
- a) a crossbar having at least one monitor mounting bracket positioned thereon;
 - b) a support arm configured to adjust the vertical height of the crossbar;
 - c) a pivot assembly positioned between the support arm and the crossbar, the pivot assembly configured to allow limited pivot adjustment of the crossbar.
11. The monitor mounting system of claim 10, wherein the pivot assembly comprises:
- a) a pivot assembly housing;
 - b) a swivel ring attached to an exterior of the pivot assembly housing;
 - c) a pivot stop positioned in the pivot assembly housing and limiting pivot adjustment to five or fewer degrees in each pivot direction.
12. The monitor mounting system of claim 11, wherein (i) the pivot assembly housing includes a pivot core threading into the pivot assembly housing, and (ii) the pivot stop includes a motion control plate engaging anti-rotation pins.
13. The monitor mounting system of claim 12, wherein the pivot assembly further includes a compression friction plate positioned within the pivot assembly housing and a threaded compression pin configured to impart force to the compression friction plate.
14. The monitor mounting system of claim 12, wherein the motion control plate is an approximately circular plate with opposing circumferential cutouts, wherein the circumferential cutouts have an arc of less than 15 degrees.
15. The monitor mounting system of claim 12, wherein an outer face of the pivot core includes at least two threaded apertures configured to receive mounting screws.
16. The monitor mounting system of claim 11, wherein the swivel ring further includes two bearing inserts, each bearing insert including an alignment groove.
17. The monitor mounting system of claim 10, wherein the support arm is a dynamic support arm including an internal elastomeric member configured to allow the support arm to move through approximately an entire range of motion with application of approximately constant force to the support arm.
18. The monitor mounting system of claim 10, wherein the crossbar has at least two monitor mounting brackets positioned thereon and the monitor mounting brackets are attached to the crossbar with a tilt connector.

19. The monitor mounting system of claim 10, wherein the crossbar includes a central segment and two outer segments which form hinge connections to the central segment.

20. The monitor mounting system of claim 10, wherein the support arm is attached to a base with a swivel connection.