

GLOVE WITH ELECTRODES

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a glove with electrodes,
5 which is used to treat by passing a weak current to the electrodes
contacted to a desired portion of the human body so to electrically
stimulating the outside portion.

BACKGROUND ART

10 Conventionally, there is generally used a pulse health
appliance which performs treatments such as stimulation of
muscles (EMS: electrical muscle stimulation), promotion of a flow
of lymph, a recovery from fatigue, and the like by contacting
electrodes to a desired portion of the human body and passing a
15 weak pulse current to the electrodes.

Such a pulse health appliance is known having various types
of electrode shapes depending on a treating method, an object
portion and the like, and there is also proposed a pulse health
appliance which has electrodes respectively attached to the palms
20 of a pair of gloves and connected to a control section including
a power supply through wiring. Such gloves with electrodes are
put on both hands and touched with a space between them to a portion
to be treated, and a weak current is passed between the electrodes
disposed on the respective gloves to perform treatments.

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DISCLOSURE OF THE INVENTION

The above-described conventional gloves with electrodes
had a problem that it was difficult to treat a portion which was

hardly accessed by both hands.

When a very small and limited portion, e.g., a portion of crow's feet, is treated, there was a problem that the treating operation was hard because it was necessary to operate the electrodes of both gloves.

Besides, because both hands are covered with the gloves, there was also a safety problem that it was difficult to operate a switch or the like so to switch the operation modes to make an emergency stop, or the like.

One or more embodiments may remedy the above problems of the existing gloves with electrodes, and one or more embodiments may provide a glove with electrodes, which was remedied the above-described operational and safety problems by disposing a pair of electrodes on the surface of the palm side of a single glove to make it possible to perform a treating operation by a single hand.

In accordance with a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a glove comprising: a glove body made of an electrical insulating material; a pair of electrodes disposed with a space between them on the surface of the palm side of the glove body, the electrodes being made of conductive woven cloth produced by weaving conductive fibers having a conductive coating fibers formed on the surface into electrical insulating fibers; an operation panel fitted near the wrist on the back or the palm of the glove body to control the supply of a current to the electrodes; and lead wires fitted to the glove body to electrically connect the output terminals of the operation panel and the respective electrodes.

The glove body may have a palm

and five fingers, one of the electrodes may be disposed on a bulge portion expanded from the root of the thumb of the glove body, and the other of the electrodes may be disposed on at least the fingertips excepting the thumb of the glove body.

The conductive woven cloth may be produced by weaving about two to five of the conductive fibers into ten of the electrical insulating fibers.

The conductive coating may include silver.

At least one of the electrodes may be sewn to the glove body by a thread so as to be not exposed to the surface of the one of the electrodes.

One of the electrodes may be sewn to the glove body as a French seam.

The operational panel may include a current feedback circuit to receive current from one of the output terminals, and a central processing unit to control the current feedback circuit in accordance with the feedback current.

The operation panel may include a power supply for electrifying the electrodes, a current feedback circuit to receive the feedback current from one of the output terminals, and a central processing unit to stop the electrifying of the electrodes by the power supply in accordance with a predetermined time of no flow of the feedback current.

Also disclosed is a glove with electrodes comprising a glove body which is made of an electrical insulating material; a pair of electrodes which are disposed with a space between them on the surface of the palm side of the glove body; an operation panel which is fitted near the wrist on the back or the palm of the glove body to control the supply of a current to the electrodes; and lead wires which are fitted to the glove body to electrically connect the output terminals of the operation panel and the respective electrodes.

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The pair of electrodes are desired to have one of them disposed on a bulge portion expanded from the root of the thumb of the glove body and the other of them disposed on at least the

fingertips excepting the thumb of the glove body. When the electrodes are disposed as described above, one of the electrodes, which is positioned on the bulge portion expanded from the root of the thumb of the operating hand, is touched to the skin of the portion to be treated, and the other electrode on the pad of at least one fingertip excepting the thumb is touched to a portion a little away from the former portion to perform the treatment. At this time, the electrode having the bulge portion expanded from the root of the thumb is touched to the skin of the portion to be treated, so that the operating hand becomes stable as a whole. And, because the other electrode is disposed on the fingertip which can make fine operations with ease, a small area can also be treated easily. The electrode disposed on the fingertip may be disposed on all of the fingertips or may be disposed on any desired finger.

The electrodes may be any type of flexible conductive material and not limited to a particular type. But, it is suitable to use conductive woven cloth, which is produced by weaving conductive fibers having the surfaces coated with conductive metal such as silver and electrical insulating fibers at an appropriate ratio, because it is good in flexibility and durability.

The glove body is suitably formed of an ordinary thin cloth for gloves but may be made of any glove material as far as it is an electrical insulating material with good operability.

The above electrodes are fixed to the glove body with a hot-melt adhesive agent or by sewing. The operation panel is attached to the vicinity of the wrist on the

back or the palm of the glove body so that the treatment operation is not disturbed.

The lead wires for connecting the electrodes and the output terminals of the operation panel may be made of a material
5 different from the electrodes but preferably formed of the electrodes by extending them, so that the production process can be reduced, and the number of parts can be decreased.

The operation panel may have its output terminals directly connected to the lead wires but preferably has the electrode
10 terminals fitted to the operation panel side of the lead wires and connected to the output terminals of the operation panel. Especially, when the electrode terminals and the output terminals of the operation panel are configured to have a snap structure so to be detachable freely, it is possible to wash the glove body
15 only. And, to securely fix the operation panel to the glove body, a flat fastener may be disposed on the contact portions of the glove body and the operation panel.

Besides, it is desirable that a power supply such as a battery to supply electricity to the electrodes is built in the
20 operation panel. When the power supply is a battery which has a low output voltage, it may be desirable to include a known step-up device for raising the output voltage because the treatment generally requires a voltage of about 10 to 100V.

25 A pair of electrodes may be disposed on the surface of the palm of a single glove body. This glove is put on one hand only, and the treatment can be made easily from a wide area to a very small portion by supplying electricity to the required portion of the human body.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a structure diagram showing the palm of a glove with electrodes according to one embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a structure diagram showing the back of the glove with electrodes according to one embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 3A is a structure diagram showing the front of an operation panel, and Fig. 3B is a structure diagram showing the back of the operation panel.

Fig. 4 is a block diagram showing an example of control of the glove with electrodes according to the present invention.

BEST MODE FOR CARRYING OUT THE INVENTION

An embodiment of the present invention will be described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

One embodiment of the glove with electrodes of the present invention will be described with reference to Fig. 1 to Fig. 3.

As shown in the drawings, a glove with electrodes 1 comprises a glove body 2 which is made of an electrical insulating material, flexible flat electrodes 3, 4 which are fixed to the palm of the glove body 2, an operation panel 30 which supplies electricity to the flat electrodes 3, 4 and controls the operation, and lead wires 5, 6 which electrically connect the operation panel 30 and the flat electrodes 3, 4.

The glove body 2 is made of an electrical insulating material which is thin and good in flexibility, such as synthetic leather,

cloth coated with a synthetic resin, or the like, and the thumb and four fingers are independently formed from one another. The glove may have the finger portion formed to have three fingers or as a mitten type.

5 The flat electrodes 3, 4 and the lead wires 5, 6 are integrally formed of the same conductive cloth. The conductive cloth is formed by weaving about two to five conductive fibers, which have the surfaces of synthetic resin fibers such as polyethylene plated with conductive metal, into ten non-plated
10 electrical insulating fibers. As the conductive metal, nickel, gold, silver, copper or another conductive metal can be used. For the flat electrodes 3, 4, a conductive thin metal plate, a metal laminate film, cloth having a conductive coating such as carbon ink applied on it (carbon printing), a carbon sheet, conductive
15 rubber, silicon or the like can be used.

Then, a process of applying the respective flat electrodes 3, 4 and the lead wires 5, 6 to the glove body 2 will be described.

The flat electrode 3 is disposed to cover from the thumb to the bulge portion expanded from the root of the thumb on the
20 surface of the palm of the glove body 2. This flat electrode 3 has its portion extended as the lead wire 5 to the vicinity of the wrist on the back of the hand, and an electrode terminal 7 for connection with the operation panel 30 is fixed near the end of the extended portion.

25 The flat electrode 4 is disposed on the four finger cushions excluding the thumb on the palm side of the glove body 2 and extended as the lead wire 6 from the little finger to the vicinity of the wrist on the back side of the hand along the edge of the

palm on the little finger side. An electrode terminal 8 for connecting to the operation panel 30 is fixed at the end of the extended portion. The flat electrode 4 may not be applied to all fingers excepting the thumb but may be applied to at least one of them. The electrode terminals 7, 8 are configured to be freely detachable from the output terminals of the operation panel by snap-fastening.

In this embodiment, the flat electrode 3 is a negative electrode and the flat electrode 4 is a positive electrode, but they may be used as reverse polarity. And it is also possible to apply an alternating voltage to them.

The flat electrodes 3, 4 and the lead wires 5, 6 can be sewn as a French seam so that a sewing thread or the like is not exposed to the surface to prevent it from contacting the human skin. The flat electrodes 3, 4 and the lead wires 5, 6 can also be fixed to the glove body 2 with a hot-melt adhesive agent.

Then, control for the operation will be described.

For example, a switch 50, a mode switching button 51, an output adjustment button 52, and an operation check lamp 53 are disposed on a surface of the operation panel 30 as shown in Fig. 3. And, output terminals 40, 40 which are connected to the electrode terminals 7, 7 disposed on the lead wires 5, 6 are disposed on the back of the operation panel 30. And, a battery 61 is placed as the power supply in the operation panel 30.

The switch 50 is operated to turn on/off the power supply.

The mode switching button 51 is operated to switch a prescribed mode of pulse voltage to be output. The prescribed mode includes a plurality of patterns with a pulse period of

voltage or the like changed.

The output adjustment button 52 is used to adjust the pulse voltage to be output. This adjustment allows determining a treatment such as a comfort mode, a stimulating mode or the like.

5 For example, the operation check lamp 53 comes on when the switch 50 is on and remains blinking while electrifying to indicate the operation to a user. It is also possible to change the color of light depending on a mode of pulse voltage or to dispose a plurality of lamps for indication.

10 Fig. 4 shows the structure of the control section of the glove with electrodes.

A control device 60 comprises, for example, the battery 61, a CPU 63, a voltage amplifying section 62, an output circuit 64, an operation button 65, and the operation check lamp 53.

15 The battery 61 may be either a rechargeable battery or a non-rechargeable dry cell.

The voltage amplifying section 62 raises the voltage from the battery 61 by, for example, a step-up device using a coil. And, another device which can raise the voltage can be used other
20 than the step-up device using a coil.

In the output circuit 64, the voltage raised by the voltage amplifying section 62 is subject to pulse control so to output a pulse voltage.

Then, a process of controlling the glove with electrodes
25 1 will be described.

According to information from the operation button 65 such as the switch 50, the mode switching button 51 or the output adjustment button 52, a signal is output from the CPU 63 to the

voltage amplifying section 62, the output circuit 64 or the operation check lamp 53. Based on the information, the voltage amplifying section 62 raises the voltage from the battery 61, and the raised voltage is supplied to the output circuit 64. The
5 output circuit 64 adjusts the output pulse mode of voltage, and the pulse voltage is supplied to the electrode terminal 7 of the glove body 2.

According to the signal from the CPU 63, the operation check lamp 53 comes on or blinks to indicate the operating state.

10 For example, when no current is passed through a voltage feedback circuit 66 for several seconds, the voltage feedback circuit 66 cuts off the main circuit to stop the main current according to a current feedback control signal from the CPU 63. And, when it is determined by the CPU 63 in about several seconds
15 that the current is passing to the voltage feedback circuit 66, the main circuit of the voltage feedback circuit 66 which was cut off is turned on again according to the current feedback control signal from the CPU 63. And, when the current does not flow for a predetermined period of time, it is controlled to turn off the
20 power supply.

The current feedback control signal is output from the CPU 63 to the voltage feedback circuit 66 to control the voltage feedback circuit 66, so that useless power consumption can be avoided.

25 Then, one example of actual use of the glove with electrodes will be described.

The operation panel 30 of the glove with electrodes is operated to turn on the power, and the operation mode is determined,

so that the glove with electrodes 1 falls in a treatment standby state. Then, the palm side of the glove with electrodes 1 on which the flat electrodes 3, 4 are applied is touched to a portion to be treated. When a small portion is to be treated, the flat
5 electrodes 3, 4 on the thumb and the index finger are touched to it with a small distance between them. Thus, a pulse current flows through and treats the human body by touching as described above. If both the flat electrodes 3, 4 can be touched to a treated portion with a small space between them, it is not limited to the above
10 method of use. If safety can be secured, the glove with electrodes 1 can be put on both hands to treat different portions at the same time.

As described above, the glove with electrodes of the present invention can easily treat from a wide area to a small portion
15 by having a pair of flat electrodes disposed on the surface of the palm side of a single glove body, putting it on one hand only, and passing a current through any portion of the human body. And, because the operation panel having the power supply in it can be removably attached to the body of the glove with electrodes, the
20 glove with electrodes can be used codeless, and the efficiency of work for treatments can be improved. Besides, the switching operation can be performed by one hand because the treatment can be performed by another hand, so that it is easy to switch the operation modes, and the power can be shut off instantly in case
25 of an emergency stop. Thus, safety can be improved.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY

The glove with electrodes of the present invention can

easily treat a portion of the human body by passing a current to it and can be produced commercially.

CLAIMS:

1. A glove comprising:

a glove body made of an electrical insulating material;

a pair of electrodes disposed with a space between them on the surface of the palm side of the glove body, the electrodes being made of conductive woven cloth produced by weaving conductive fibers having a conductive coating fibers formed on the surface into electrical insulating fibers;

an operation panel fitted near the wrist on the back or the palm of the glove body to control the supply of a current to the electrodes; and

lead wires fitted to the glove body to electrically connect the output terminals of the operation panel and the respective electrodes.

2. The glove according to Claim 1, wherein the glove body has a palm and five fingers, one of the electrodes is disposed on a bulge portion expanded from the root of the thumb of the glove body, and the other of the electrodes is disposed on at least the fingertips excepting the thumb of the glove body.

3. The glove according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the conductive woven cloth is produced by weaving about two to five of the conductive fibers into ten of the electrical insulating fibers.

4. The glove according to anyone of Claim 1 to 3, wherein the conductive coating includes silver.

5. The glove according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein the electrodes are fixed to the glove body with a hot-melt adhesive agent or by sewing.
6. The glove accordingly to claim 5, wherein at least one of the electrodes is sewn to the glove body by a thread so as to be not exposed to the surface of the one of the electrodes.
7. The glove according to claim 6, wherein the one of the electrodes is sewn to the glove body as a French seam.
8. The glove according to any one of Claim 1 to 7, wherein the lead wires are formed by extending the electrodes.
9. The glove according to any one of Claims 1 to 8, wherein the operation panel is connected to the lead wires via electrode terminals.
10. The glove according to any one of Claims 1 to 9, wherein the operation panel is detachably connected to the electrode terminals.
11. The glove according to any one of claims 1 to 10, wherein the operational panel includes a current feedback circuit to receive current from one of the output terminals, and a central processing unit to control the current feedback circuit in accordance with the feedback current.
12. The glove according to any one of Claims 1 to 10, wherein the operation panel includes a power supply for electrifying the electrodes, a current feedback circuit to receive the feedback current from one of the output terminals, and a central processing unit to stop the

electrifying of the electrodes by the power supply in accordance with a predetermined time of no flow of the feedback current.

13. The glove according to Claim 12, wherein the power supply includes a battery, and the operation panel includes a step-up device for raising the voltage of the battery and electrifying the electrodes.

ABSTRACT

A glove with electrodes comprises a pair of flat electrodes 3, 4 which are disposed with a space therebetween on the surface of the palm side of a glove body 2 which is made of an electrical insulating material, an operation panel 30 which is fitted in the vicinity of the wrist on the back or the palm of the glove body 2 to control to supply electricity to the flat electrodes 3, 4, and lead wires 5, 6 which are fitted to the glove body 2 and electrically connect output terminals 40 of the operation panel 30 and the respective flat electrodes 3, 4. The respective flat electrodes 3, 4 are touched with a little space between them to a portion of the human body, and a current is passed to the portion for treatment. Thus, the glove body 2 can be put on one hand only to easily treat from a wide area to a small portion by passing a current to any portion of the human body.