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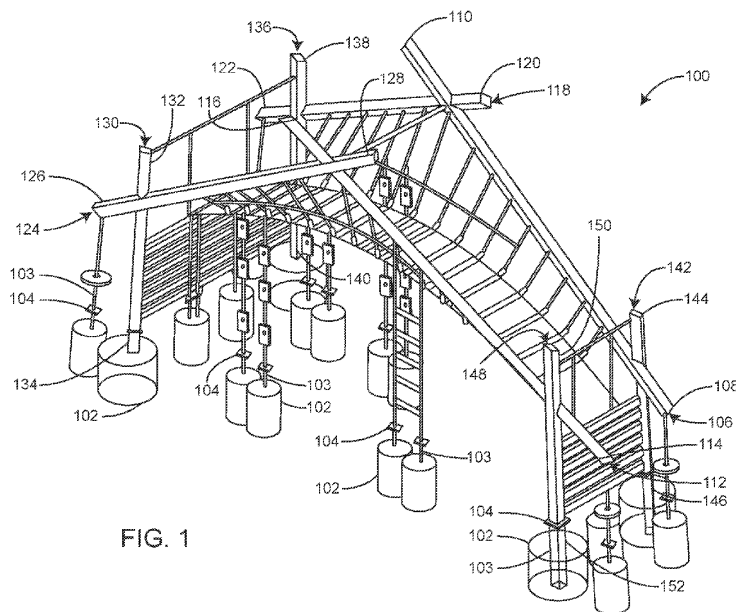


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: Embodiments of play systems (100) incorporating a balanced crosspiece (112, 124, 130, 148) concept are disclosed. In one embodiment, a series of segments (302, 304, 306, 308, 310, 312, 314, 316, 317, 318, 320, 322, 324) are joined together so as to create the appearance of two crosspieces (112, 124, 130, 148) intersecting with one another (112, 124, 130, 148) at a point where one of the crosspieces (112, 124, 130, 148) has an appearance of having been notched out. Play elements are illustratively connected to at least some of the segments (302, 304, 306, 308, 310, 312, 314, 316, 317, 318, 320, 322, 324).

[Continued on next page]

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