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Danby et al.

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(54) **MASSAGE DEVICE HAVING VARIABLE STROKE LENGTH**

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See application file for complete search history.

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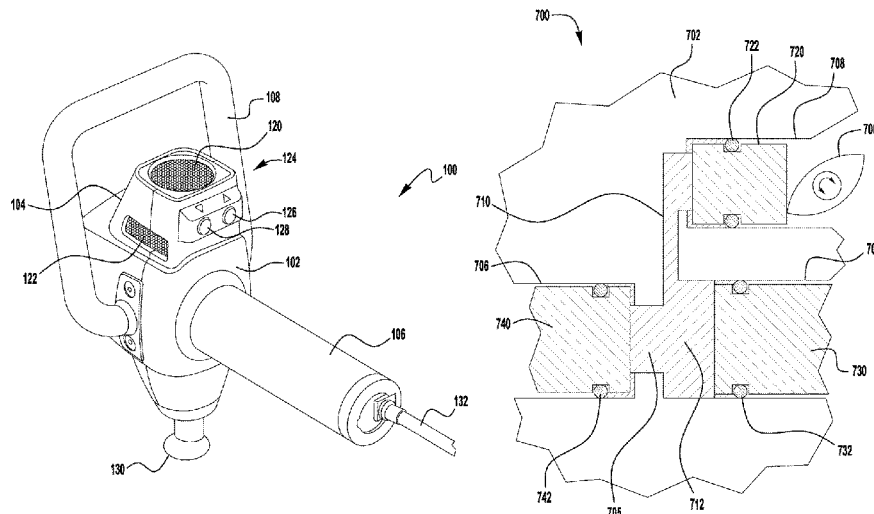
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Exemplary embodiments of massaging devices are disclosed herein. One exemplary embodiment includes a piston having a longitudinal axis, a massaging head connected to the piston, a motor located on a first side of the longitudinal axis and a handle located on a second side of the longitudinal axis. A drive mechanism for moving the piston and massage head is also included.

22 Claims, 7 Drawing Sheets



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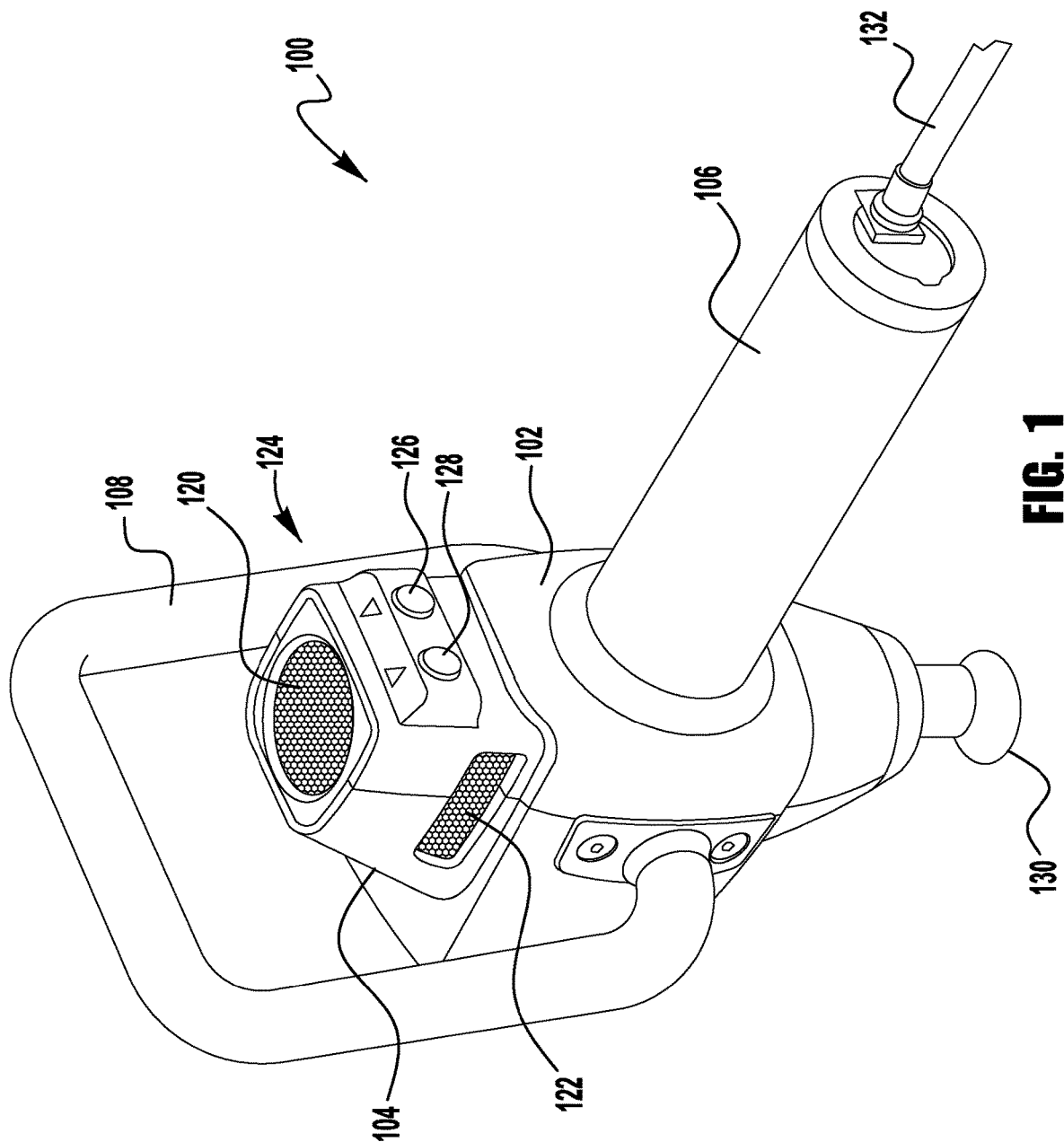
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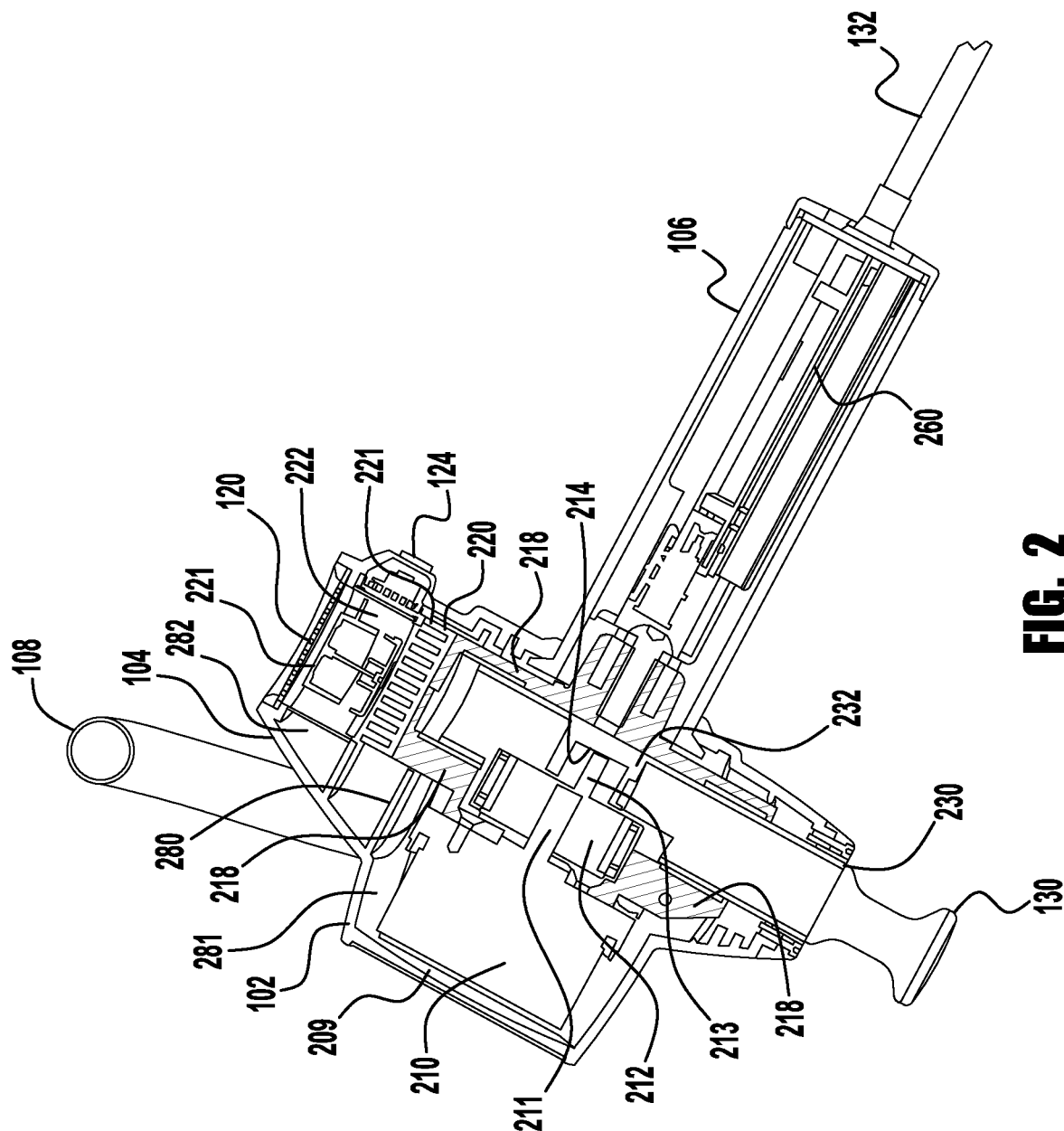


FIG. 2

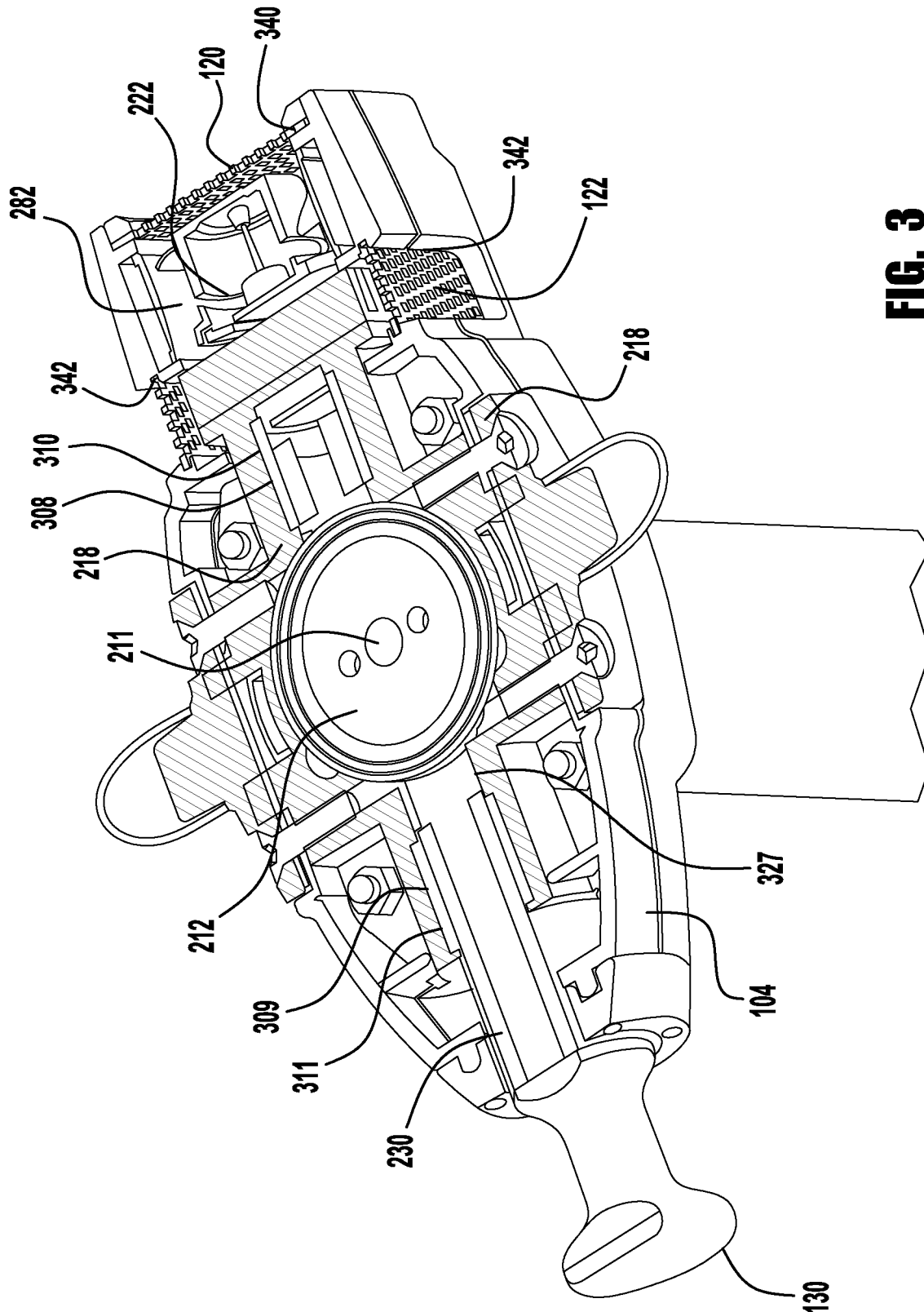


FIG. 3

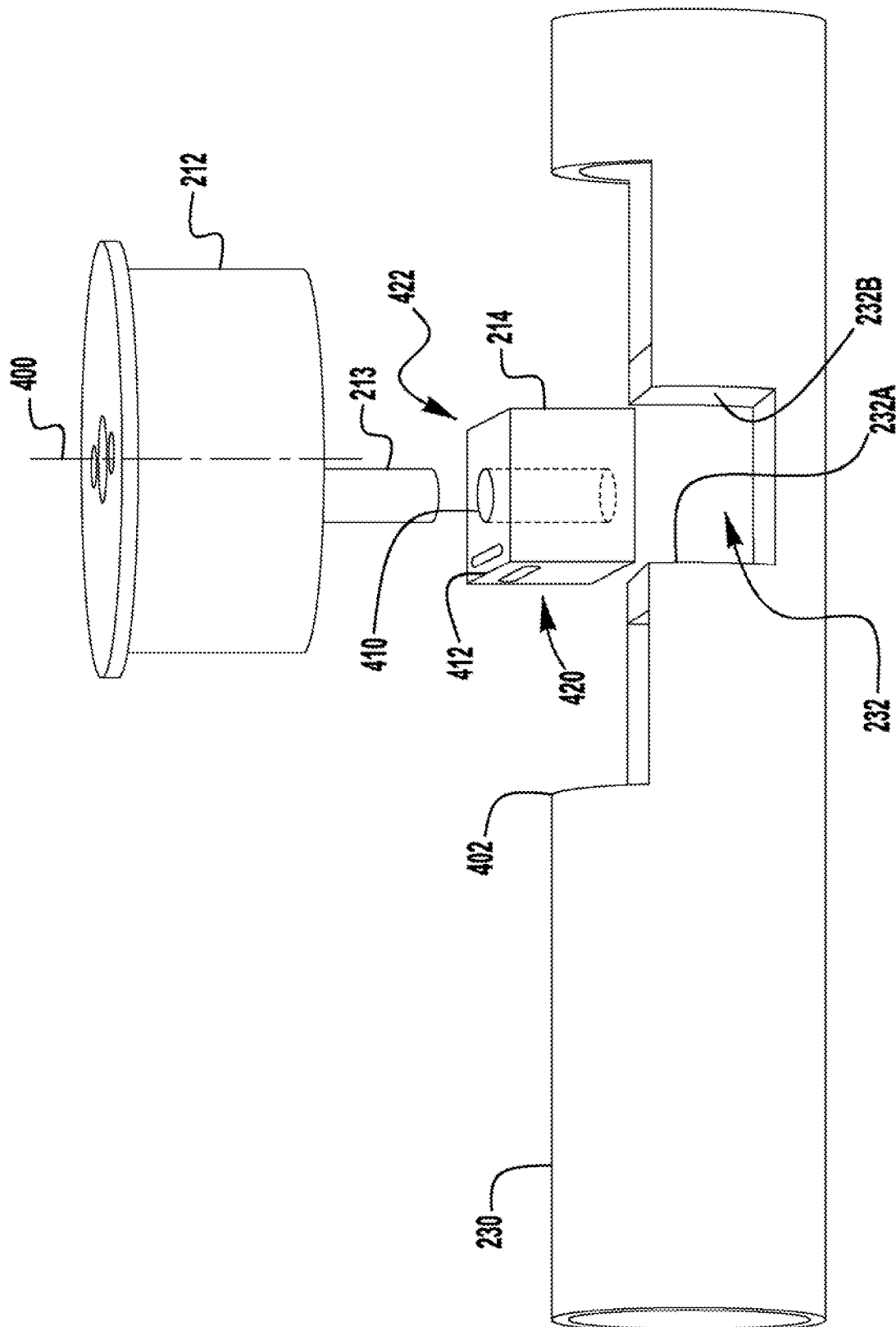


FIG. 4

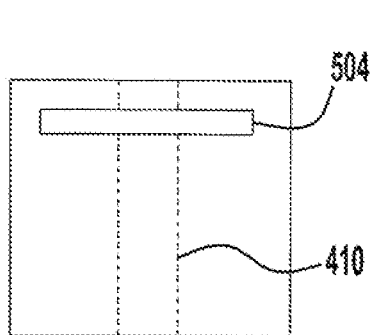


FIG. 5A

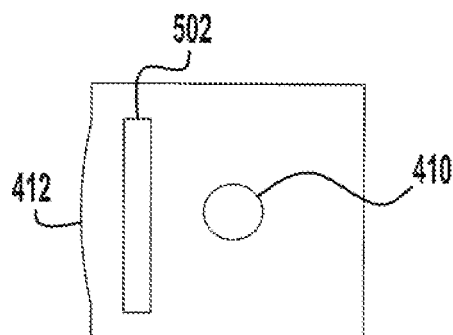


FIG. 5B

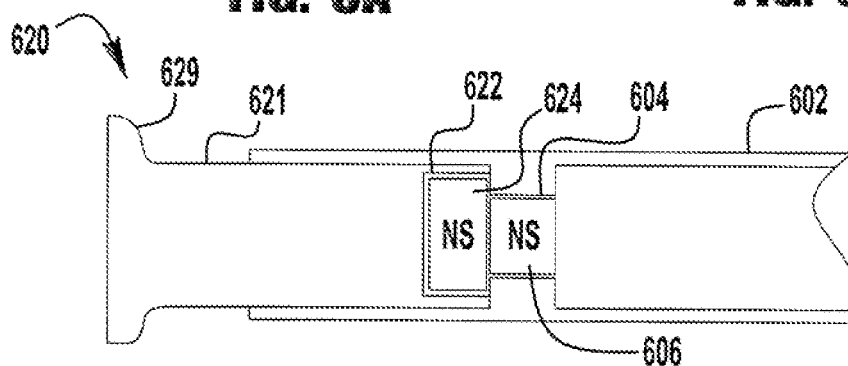


FIG. 6

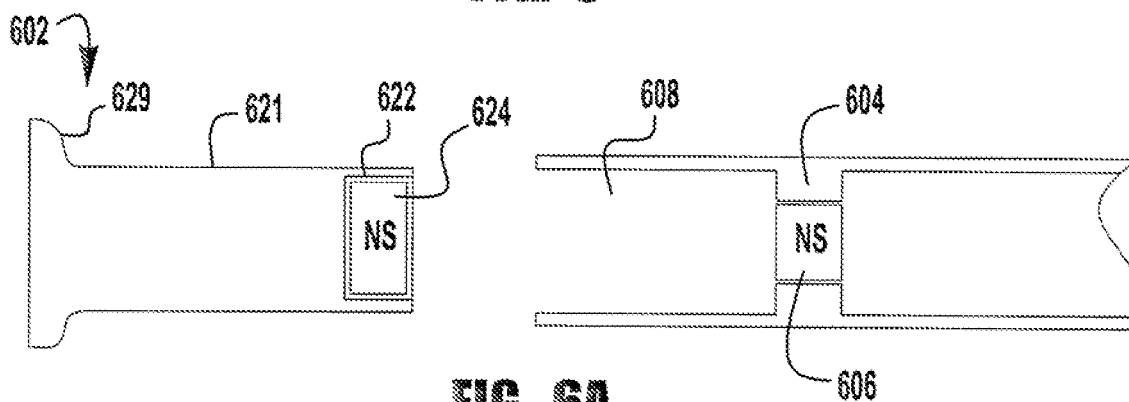


FIG. 6A

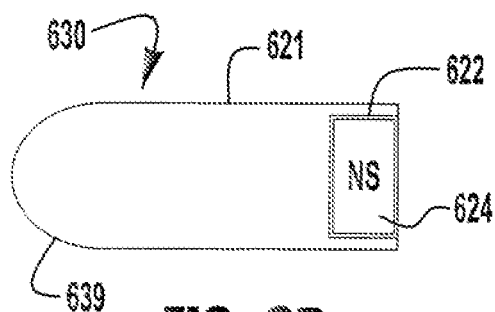


FIG. 6B

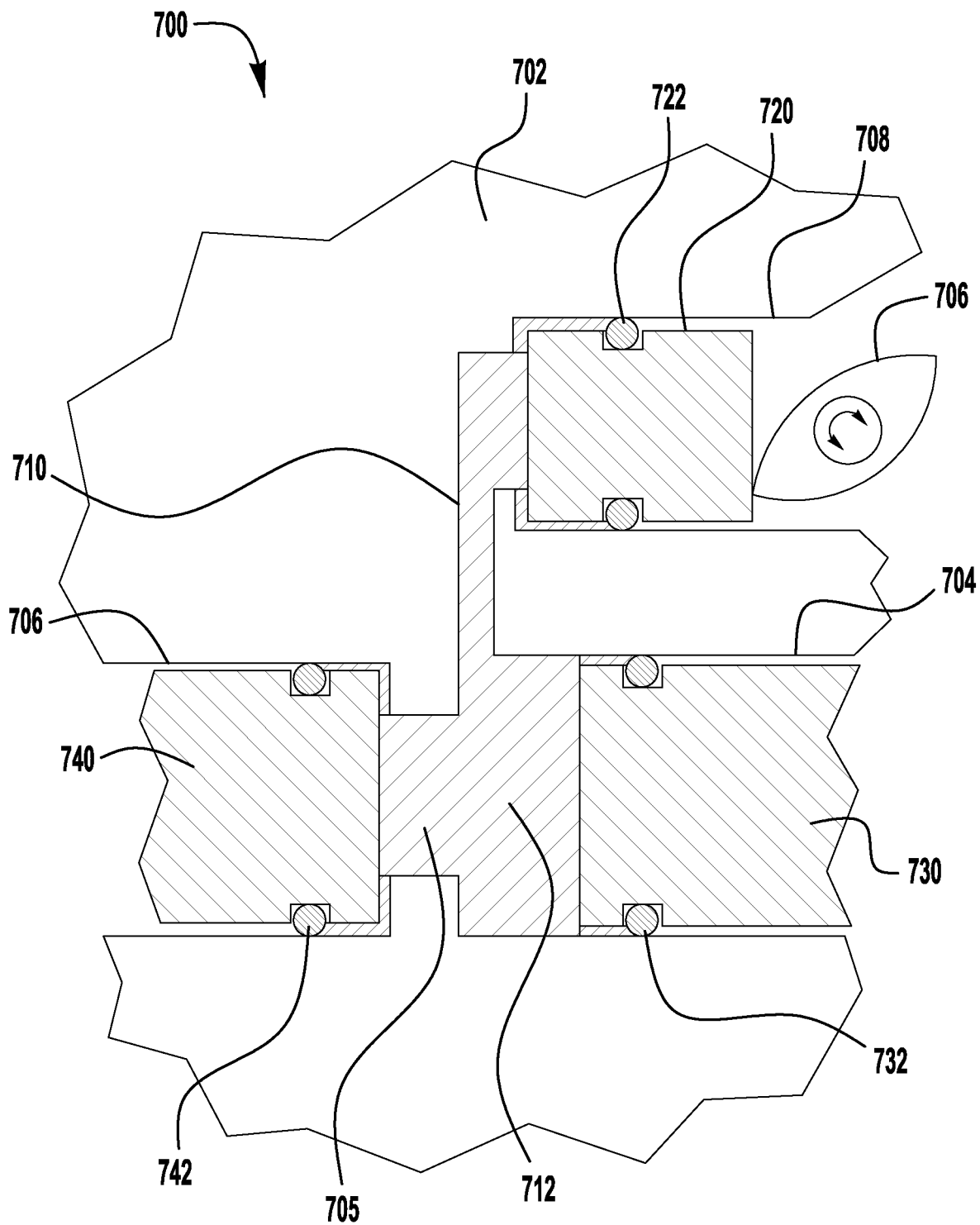


FIG. 7

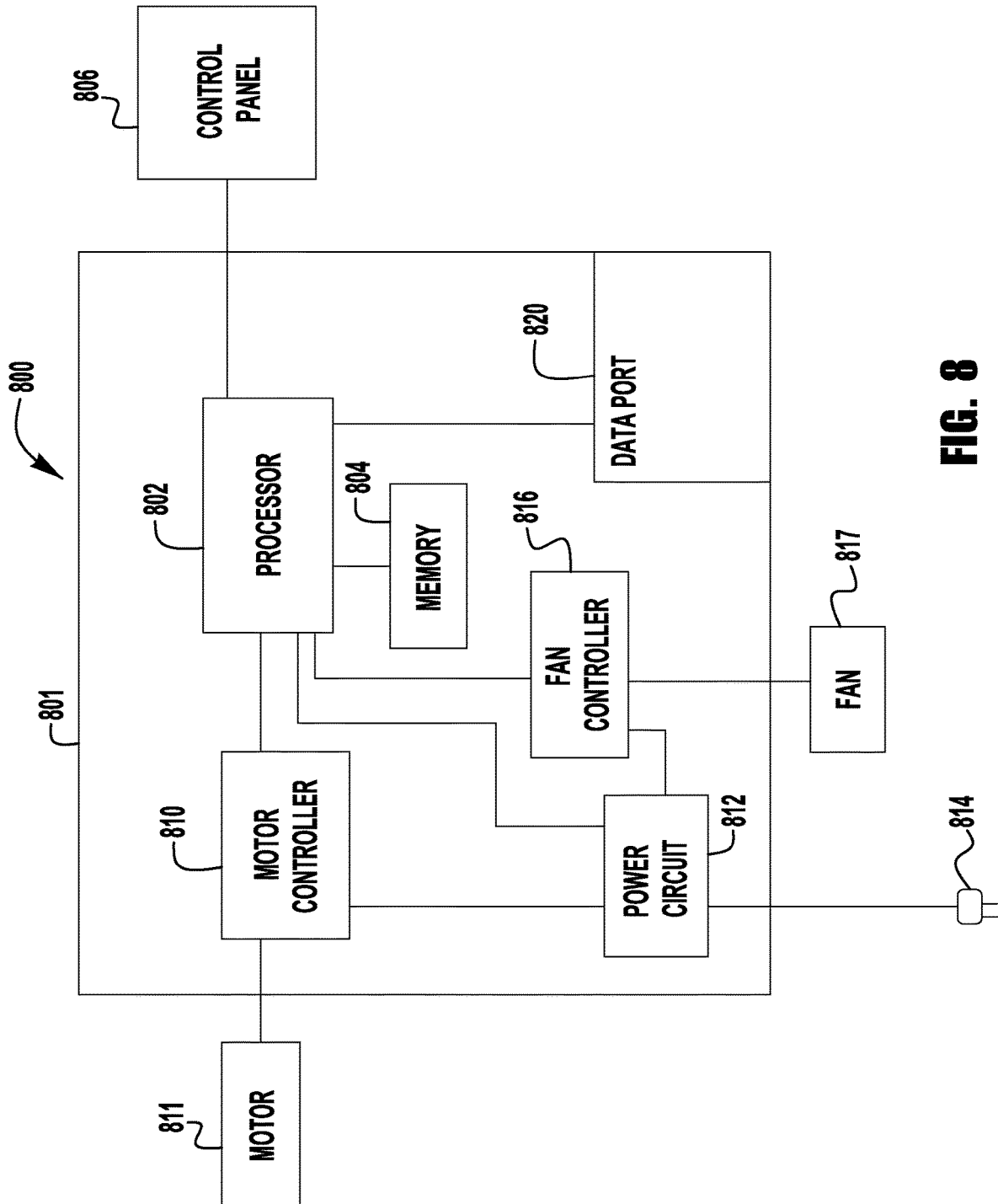


FIG. 8

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MESSAGE DEVICE HAVING VARIABLE STROKE LENGTH

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. Non-Provisional patent application Ser. No. 14/317,573 filed Jun. 27, 2014 and entitled "Massaging Device Having a Heat Sink" which claims priority to and the benefits of U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/841,693 filed on Jul. 1, 2013 and entitled "Massaging Device" which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

BACKGROUND

This invention relates generally to medical devices, and more particularly, to a deep muscle-stimulating device used to increase muscle metabolism, increase the lactic acid cycle and relieve pain.

Vibrating massaging devices are available on the market today; however, those devices suffer from many deficiencies. Many of the prior art massaging devices are bulky, get very hot, are noisy and/or are difficult to use for extended periods of time.

SUMMARY

Exemplary embodiments of massaging devices are disclosed herein. One exemplary embodiment includes a piston having a longitudinal axis and a massaging head connected to the piston. A motor is located on a first side of the longitudinal axis and a handle is located on a second side of the longitudinal axis. A drive mechanism for moving the piston and massage head is also included.

Another exemplary embodiment of a massaging device includes a handle, a piston, a massaging head attached to the piston, a motor, a drive mechanism for converting rotary motion of the motor to linear motion to drive the piston back and forth in a reciprocating motion, a processor, memory, a data connection in circuit communication with the processor and logic for transmitting data between the massaging device and a remote device.

Still another exemplary embodiment includes a massaging device that has a handle, a motor, a drive mechanism for converting rotary motion of the motor to reciprocating motion, a piston movable in a linear reciprocating motion connected to the drive mechanism and a massage head attached to the piston. The exemplary embodiment also includes a heat sink in thermal communication with the motor and drive mechanism, and a housing having two cavities. The first cavity at least partially surrounds the motor and the second cavity at least partially surrounds the heat sink. The cavities are separated from one another and the second cavity includes one or more openings for allowing air to flow over the heat sink to dissipate heat from the massager.

Another exemplary massaging device includes a housing, a handle extending outward from the housing and a piston having a longitudinal axis extending substantially perpendicular to the handle. A massaging head is connected to the piston. In addition, the massaging device includes a motor, a drive mechanism for moving the piston and a control panel. The control panel is located on the housing above the handle.

In yet another exemplary embodiment, a massaging device includes a handle, a piston, a quick-connection mechanism and one or more massaging heads releasably

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connectable to the piston by the quick-connection mechanism. The massaging device further includes a motor and a drive mechanism for moving the piston.

Another exemplary massaging device includes a handle, a piston, a massaging head connected to the piston, a motor and a drive mechanism for moving the piston. The drive mechanism includes a crank bearing that has one or more spring bars.

Still yet, another exemplary massaging device includes a handle, a piston a massaging head connected to the piston, a drive mechanism for moving the piston in a back and forth motion and a lost motion mechanism located between the massaging head and the drive mechanism.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other features and advantages of the present invention will become better understood with regard to the following description and accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 illustrates a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a massaging device;

FIG. 2 illustrates a first cross-section of the exemplary massaging device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 illustrates a second cross-section of the exemplary massaging device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 illustrates an exploded perspective view of an exemplary drive mechanism of the massaging device;

FIGS. 5A and 5B show enlarged side views of a crank bearing having spring bars for use in the exemplary drive mechanism of FIG. 4;

FIGS. 6, 6A and 6B illustrate an exemplary quick-disconnect mechanism for connecting one or more massaging heads to a massaging device;

FIG. 7 illustrates a schematic view of an exemplary lost motion control mechanism for varying the stroke of the piston driving a massaging head; and

FIG. 8 illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a simplified block circuit diagram for a massaging device.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The Detailed Description merely describes exemplary embodiments of the invention and is not intended to limit the scope of the claims in any way. Indeed, the invention is broader than and unlimited by the exemplary embodiments, and unless specifically indicated otherwise, the terms used in the claims have their full ordinary meaning.

"Circuit communication" as used herein indicates a communicative relationship between devices. Direct electrical, electromagnetic and optical connections and indirect electrical, electromagnetic and optical connections are examples of circuit communication. Two devices are in circuit communication if a signal from one is received by the other, regardless of whether the signal is modified by some other device. For example, two devices separated by one or more of the following—amplifiers, filters, transformers, optoisolators, digital or analog buffers, analog integrators, other electronic circuitry, fiber optic transceivers or satellites—are in circuit communication if a signal from one is communicated to the other, even though the signal is modified by the intermediate device(s). As another example, an electromagnetic sensor is in circuit communication with a signal if it receives electromagnetic radiation from the signal. As a final example, two devices not directly connected to each other, but both capable of interfacing with a third device, such as, for example, a processor, are in circuit communication.

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Also, as used herein, voltages and values representing digitized voltages are considered to be equivalent for the purposes of this application, and thus the term “voltage” as used herein refers to either a signal, or a value in a processor representing a signal, or a value in a processor determined from a value representing a signal.

“Signal,” as used herein includes, but is not limited to one or more electrical signals, analog or digital signals, one or more computer instructions, a bit or bit stream, or the like.

“Logic,” synonymous with “circuit” as used herein includes, but is not limited to hardware, firmware, software and/or combinations of each to perform a function(s) or an action(s). For example, based on a desired application or needs, logic may include a software controlled processor, microprocessor or microcontroller, discrete logic, such as an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC) or other programmed logic device. Logic may also be fully embodied as software. The circuits identified and described herein may have many different configurations to perform the desired functions.

Any values identified in the detailed description are exemplary, and they are determined as needed for a particular massaging device. Accordingly, the inventive concepts disclosed and claimed herein are not limited to particular values or ranges of values used to describe the embodiments disclosed herein.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of a hand-held massaging device 100. The exemplary massaging device 100 includes a main housing 102 that houses a motor and a drive unit and an upper housing 104 that includes a heat sink and a fan. In addition, massaging device 100 includes a first handle 106, and a second optional handle 108. Handle 106 has a longitudinal axis that extends away from the housing 102. The massaging device 100 also includes a massaging head 130. As discussed in more detail below, in some embodiments massaging head 130 includes a quick-release connection.

Massaging device 100 includes a control panel 124. In one embodiment, control panel 124 comprises a first momentary pushbutton 126 and a second momentary pushbutton 128. First and second pushbuttons 126, 128 may serve multiple purposes. In one embodiment, pushing the first pushbutton 126 once moves the massaging device 100 to a first preset speed. Pushing the first pushbutton 126 a second time moves the massaging device 100 to a second preset speed. Accordingly, multiple preset speeds may be selected by pushing a single pushbutton. In addition, pushing pushbutton 126 and holding it down may increase the speed of the massaging head until the user releases the pushbutton 126.

In addition, if the massaging device 100 is turned off, pushing second pushbutton 128 once and holding it in for a period of time turns on the massaging device 100. Pushing the second pushbutton 128 in and holding it in for a period of time, such as, for example one second, causes massaging device 100 to turn off. While massaging device 100 is turned on, pushing and releasing second pushbutton 128 decreases the speed of the massaging device 100 to the next lowest preset speed. Pushing and releasing pushbutton 128 again further reduces the speed of the massaging device 100. In some embodiments, the operating speed of the massaging device is generally between about 600 and 3600 strokes per minute.

The control panel 124 is located above handle 106 on upper housing 104. Control panel 124 is located off of the handle 106, which prevents accidental contact between a user's hand and the control panel 124 and allows a user to

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move her hand to any position on the handle 106 during operation. Preferably, control panel 124 is located so that it is reachable by a user's thumb without the user having to remove her hand from the handle 106. In addition, massaging device 100 includes a power cord 132 for providing power to the massaging device 100.

Although the exemplary control panel 124 illustrates two pushbuttons 126, 128, other controls may be used, such as dials and switches. In addition, visual or audible signals may be generated and displayed on control panel 124. To that extent, control panel 124 may include a visual display (not shown), an audible device (not shown) or the like, such as, for example a speaker, or the like. If a visual or audible device is used, the visual or audible device may be located proximate the pushbuttons or other controls, or may be located apart from such controls.

Upper housing 104 includes an air intake aperture covered by intake grate 120 and one or more air outlet apertures covered by outtake grate(s) 122. As described in more detail below, the heat-generating internal components of massaging device 100 are cooled by air passing through upper housing portion 104.

FIGS. 2 and 3 are cross-sections of massaging device 100. Located within handle 106 is control circuitry 260. Control circuitry 260 is in circuit communication with power cord 132, control panel 124, fan 222 and motor 210.

Motor 210 is located in housing 102 opposite handle 106. Motor 210 is a variable speed DC motor; however, motor 210 may be a constant speed motor, an AC motor or the like. In one embodiment, motor 210 has an operating speed of between about 600 and 3600 revolutions per minute (RPMs).

Motor 210 includes a shaft 211 that extends into a flywheel 212. Flywheel 212 includes a cylindrical projecting member or crank pin 213 positioned offset from the centerline 400 (FIG. 4) of the flywheel 212. Crank pin 213 is inserted in an aperture 410 (FIG. 4) of a crank bearing 214. Crank bearing 214 is inserted into a pocket 232 of a piston 230. The piston also has an elongated cutout 402 to receive part of the flywheel 212 for compactness while permitting piston reciprocation. Crank bearing 214 is cuboid in the exemplary embodiment, however, in some exemplary embodiments, crank bearing 214 may be cylindrical.

FIG. 4 is an exploded perspective view of piston 230, flywheel 212 and crank bearing 214. Piston 230 may be made of any suitable material, and in some embodiments, piston 230 is made of aluminum. As illustrated in the drawings, in some embodiments, motor 210 is located on one side of the longitudinal axis of piston 230 and handle 106 is located on a second side of the longitudinal axis. Piston 230 includes a pocket 232 (or transverse slot) having a first wall 232A and a second wall 232B. In some embodiments, piston 230 is hollow on either side of pocket 232 to reduce weight.

Flywheel 212 includes a cylindrical projecting member 213. Crank pin 213 is off set from the centerline 400 of flywheel 212. Accordingly, as flywheel 212 rotates, crank pin 213 rotates in a circular path around the centerline 400 of the flywheel 212. Rotation of crank pin 213 causes crank bearing 214 to travel in a circular motion within piston pocket 232 causing reciprocal motion of piston 230.

Piston 230 is restrained by two spaced apart bearings 310, 311 (FIG. 3). Bearing 310 is located on a first side of flywheel 212 and bearing 311 is located on a second side of flywheel 212. Accordingly, piston 230 may only move in a back-and-forth motion along its longitudinal axis. The arrangement of the bearings 310, 311 on both ends of the

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piston 230 provides for a very sturdy and robust drive mechanism. Because piston 230 is constrained to a linear back-and-forth motion, as crank bearing 214 rotates in a circular motion, it acts against side walls 232A and 232B of pocket 232. This mechanism for converting rotary to linear motion is known as a “Scotch yoke.”

In order to correctly assemble the components of a Scotch yoke drive, the pocket 232 (or walls of transverse slot) must be milled larger than the outside dimensions of the crank bearing 214. The gap between the inside of pocket 232 and the outside of crank bearing 214 is typically 0.1 mm inches. Motor 210 rotates at between about 600 and 3600 RPMs and each time the crank bearing 214 switches from moving, for example, toward side wall 232A of pocket 232 to moving toward the other side wall 232B, the bearing block 214 travels the small gap and smacks or strikes the side wall, e.g., side 232B, which causes a significant amount of noise and wear.

In one exemplary embodiment, crank bearing 214 is made with one spring bar 412. FIG. 5A is an enlarged elevation view of side 420 of crank bearing 214 and FIG. 5B is an enlarged plan view showing top 422 of crank bearing 214. The spring bars 412 are created by milling the outside of the spring block 214 proud by 0.4 mm in the area of the desired spring bar.

As illustrated in FIG. 5B the surface of spring bar 412 bows outward. The size of the bow is set to increase the width of the crank bearing 214 to be slightly larger (0.4 mm) than the width of the pocket 232. In some embodiments, slots 502 and 504 are milled into the surfaces of side 420 and top 422 below the spring bar 412 to allow spring bar 412 to deflect inwards. In some embodiments, slots 502 and 504 intersect thereby leaving spring bar 412 supported only on each end.

Thus, when crank bearing 214 is inserted into pocket 232, the spring bar 412 contacts the corresponding surface of the pocket 232 and deflects inward which causes crank bearing 214 to fit snugly in pocket 232. Accordingly, as crank bearing 214 changes directions from, for example, moving toward side wall 232A to moving toward side wall 232B, the spring bar 412 takes up the slack in the gap and prevent noise and wear that would otherwise be generated by the crank bearing 214 striking the side walls 232A, 232B of the pocket 232.

Crank bearing 214 may be made of any suitable material; in some embodiments, crank bearing 214 is made of plastic. Although the exemplary embodiment is shown and described as having one spring bar, exemplary embodiments may have any number of spring bars.

Massaging device 100 includes a drive housing 218. Drive housing 218 is made of a heat conducting material, such as, for example, aluminum and has a longitudinal bore 327 passing therethrough to receive piston 230. As shown in FIG. 3, drive housing 218 includes a first internal cylindrical groove 308 for holding bearing 310 and a second internal cylindrical groove 309 for holding bearing 311. Spaced bearings 310 and 311 mount and guide the piston 230 relative to the drive housing 218. Drive housing 318 surrounds piston 230 and flywheel 212. In some embodiments, drive housing 318 is made up of multiple components, such as an upper drive housing and a lower drive housing.

In addition, motor 210 includes a motor housing 209 that bolts onto drive housing 218. Motor housing 209 is also made of a heat-conducting material, such as, for example, aluminum. Secured to drive housing 218 is heat sink 220.

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Heat sink 220 includes a plurality of fins 221. Heat sink 220 is made of a heat conducting-material, such as, for example, aluminum.

Main housing 102 contains a first cavity 281. Upper housing 104 contains a second cavity 282. First cavity 281 and second cavity 282 are separated by a barrier 280. Motor housing 209 and drive housing 218 are located in the first cavity 281. Heat sink 220 is located in second cavity 282. The exemplary embodiment describes a main housing 102 and upper housing 104. These may be portions made up of a single structure or multiple structures secured to each other.

Second cavity 282 includes an air inlet aperture 340 which is covered by grate 120 and one or more air outlet apertures 342 covered by one or more grates 122. A fan 222 is located in second cavity 282. When the fan 222 is activated, air enters second cavity 282 through air inlet aperture 340 and passes over cooling fins 221 of heat sink 220, and the air then passes out of second cavity 282 through the one or more air outlets 342. The fan may be activated by a switch (not shown) on control panel 124, activated automatically when the massaging device 100 is turned on, or may be activated by a thermostat (not shown). Thus, the cooling system for massaging device 100 is located in second cavity 282 and is isolated from the other components in the massaging device 100.

In typical massaging devices, cooling air is blown over the motor. Because the massaging devices operate for long periods of time in an atmosphere that is subject to a significant amount of dust and lint because the massaging device is often used on a person wearing clothes, a towel or a robe. Over time, the dust and lint may build up on the motor and cause the prior art massaging devices to overheat. Locating the cooling system in a cavity 282 that is isolated from the rest of the internal components minimizes this type of failure. The air outlet grates 122 may be sized larger to allow any lint and dust to freely pass out of the cavity 282. In addition, the surface of the heat sink 220 is smooth and thus, there will be few pockets for dust and lint to get trapped.

FIGS. 6 and 6A illustrate an exemplary embodiment of a quick-connect system 600 for connecting a massaging head 620 to a piston 602. When providing a deep tissue massage using a massaging device, such as, for example, massaging device 100, it may be desirable to switch massaging heads to work on different muscles or different portions of muscles during the massage. The exemplary quick-connect system 600 allows a user to quickly switch massaging heads 620. Moreover, the exemplary quick-connect system 600 may be used without turning off the massaging device 100.

Quick-connect system 600 includes a piston 602 that has a hollow-end bore 608 for receiving the shaft 621 of a massaging head 620. Located within the bore 608 of piston 602 is a cylindrical seat 604. Cylindrical seat 604 retains a magnet 606. Magnet 606 is illustrated with its north pole located flush with the seat and facing toward the opening in bore 608. Massaging head 620 includes a shaft 621 having a cylindrical pocket 622 at the distal end. Located within the cylindrical pocket 622 is a magnet 624. Magnet 624 is positioned so that its south pole is located at the distal end of shaft 621. Accordingly, when the shaft 621 of massaging head 620 is slid into opening in bore 608, the magnets 606 and 624 are attracted to one another and magnetically hold massaging head 620 firmly in place.

To remove massaging head 620, a user need only apply a sufficient amount of force to separate the two magnets 606, 624. The strength of the magnets 606, 624 are sized to

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prevent the massaging head **620** from separating from the piston **602** during normal use, and yet allow a user to quickly remove and replace the massaging head **620**. In some embodiments the end **626** of the massaging head **620** is rounded, pointed or tapered (not shown) to allow it to easily slip into the opening **608** even while the piston **608** is moving.

FIG. 6B illustrates another quick-connect massaging head **630**. Quick-connect massaging head **630** is substantially the same as massaging head **620** except that the head portion **639** has a different shape than head portion **629** of massaging head **620**.

In some instances, it may be desirable to adjust the throw or the stroke length of the massaging head to work on larger or smaller muscle groups, or deeper or shallower points of stress or soreness in the muscles. FIG. 7 illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a lost motion system **700**. Although lost motion system **700** is a hydraulic lost motion system, other mechanical lost motion devices may be used in accordance with embodiments of the present invention.

Lost motion system **700** is contained in housing **702**. Housing **702** may be similar to drive housing **218** described above except it may need to be larger to accommodate lost motion system **700**. Housing **702** includes a floating piston **720** located in first cylindrical bore **708**. Floating piston **720** includes a sealing member **722** for forming a seal between floating piston **720** and first cylindrical bore **708**. A cam **706** secured to housing **702** may be rotated to adjust the amount of travel that floating piston **720** may move. A passage **710** fluidically connects first cylindrical bore **708** to second cylindrical bore **704**.

A drive piston **730** is located in second cylindrical bore **704**. Drive piston **730** includes a sealing member **732** to seal between the drive piston **730** and second cylindrical bore **704**. Drive piston **730** may be driven in substantially the same way as described above with respect to piston **230**. A passage **705** fluidically connects second cylindrical bore **704** and passage **710** to third cylindrical bore **706**. Located within third cylindrical bore **706** is an output piston **740**.

Output piston **740** includes a sealing member **742**, such as, for example, an o-ring to form a seal between drive piston **730** and third cylindrical bore **706**. Hydraulic fluid **712** is located in passages **705**, **710** and portions of the first, second, and third cylindrical cavities **708**, **704** and **706** as illustrated. A massaging head (not shown) is connected to output piston **740**.

During operation, if cam **706** is set so that floating piston **720** is retained at the proximate end of first cylindrical bore **708** (as illustrated), movement of the drive piston **730** moves output piston **740** its maximum stroke length. If cam **706** is set so that floating piston **720** moves to adjacent the distal end of first cylindrical bore **708**, movement of the drive piston **730** moves output piston **740** its minimum stroke length. The cam may also be selectively rotated to intermediate positions to choose different magnitudes of floating piston movement resulting in different selected magnitudes of output piston movement.

In some embodiments, floating piston **720** is physically connected to the cam or other adjustment mechanism so that it is positioned in a predetermined position and remains stationary during operation of the drive piston **730**. Thus, floating piston **720** does not float during operation of the massaging device.

In some embodiments, the lost motion system may be contained in the massaging head itself, or in an adaptor that connects between the piston and the massaging head. Thus, rather than having a cam in the housing of the massaging

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device, different applicator heads or adaptors having a set lost motion, or variable lost motion systems integral therein may be used. In some embodiments, such adaptors and massaging heads may be adapted with a quick-connect systems similar to the ones described with respect to FIGS. 6 and 6A.

FIG. 8 illustrates a simplified exemplary electrical schematic diagram **800** of an embodiment of a massaging device. The components disclosed as being on a particular circuit board may be on multiple circuit boards or individually mounted and hardwired to one another. Circuit **801** includes memory **804**, motor control circuitry **810** and fan control circuitry **816**, which are in circuit communication with processor **802**. Fan control circuitry **816** is in circuit communication with fan **817**.

Power circuitry **812** may be included on circuit board **801** or may be located on its own external to the massager. Power circuitry **812** includes the necessary power conditioning circuitry to provide power to both the electronics and the motors. In circuit communication with power circuitry **812** is plug **814**. Optionally two or more power circuits may be utilized. All of the connections between power circuitry **812** and the other components may not be shown in FIG. 8; however, those skilled in the art have the required knowledge to provide power to the devices that require power. Motor control circuit **810** is in circuit communication with driver motor **811**. Drive motor **811** is used to drive the piston and massaging head as described above.

Memory **804** is a processor readable media and includes the necessary logic to operate the massaging device. Examples of different processor readable media include Flash Memory, Read-Only Memory (ROM), Random-Access Memory (RAM), programmable read-only memory (PROM), electrically programmable read-only memory (EPROM), electrically erasable programmable read-only memory (EEPROM), magnetic disk, and optically readable mediums, and others. Still further, the processes and logic described herein can be merged into one large process flow or divided into many sub-process flows. The order in which the process flows herein have been described is not critical and can be rearranged while still accomplishing the same results. Indeed, the process flows described herein may be rearranged, consolidated and/or reorganized in their implementation as warranted or desired.

In addition, processor **802** is in circuit communication with control panel **806**. Control panel **806** includes any desired pushbuttons, dials, displays or the like. Control panel **806** provides the operator interface to operate and control the massaging device.

Processor **802** is also in circuit communication with data connection **820**. Representative data connections **820** include an Ethernet wire, Bluetooth, WiFi, optical transmitter/reader, an IR reader and the like. Combinations of two or more different data connections **820** may be used. Data connection **820** may be used to transmit data to an outside device, such as, for example, a computer or hand-held portable device. Various uses for transmitting such data are described below.

In some embodiments, processor **802** includes logic to collect and store data related to use of the massaging device. Exemplary types of data may include usage rates, operating times or the like. In some embodiments, different massaging heads include an RFID chip and when inserted into the massaging device, an RFID reader (not shown) identifies and stores the type of massaging head utilized. In some embodiments, a customer number may be associated with the data. This data may be used to determine lease rates of

the massaging device, for calculating cost/benefit analysis, or for setting up customized massages.

In some embodiments, data may be uploaded from a computer or hand-held portable device to the massaging device. Such data may include customized massaging programs tailored for individual needs. In some embodiments, the customized massaging program may be reflective of prior massages given to a customer that were particularly well-received by the customer.

In some embodiments, the customized massaging program may indicate to the user on a display on the control panel 806 message times, locations, type of message head to use or the like to ensure covering the desired locations with the customized massage.

While various inventive aspects, concepts and features of the inventions may be described and illustrated herein as embodied in combination in the exemplary embodiments, these various aspects, concepts and features may be used in many alternative embodiments, either individually or in various combinations and sub-combinations thereof. Unless expressly excluded herein all such combinations and sub-combinations are intended to be within the scope of the present inventions. Still further, while various alternative embodiments as to the various aspects, concepts and features of the inventions—such as alternative materials, structures, configurations, methods, circuits, devices and components, software, hardware, control logic, alternatives as to form, fit and function, and so on—may be described herein, such descriptions are not intended to be a complete or exhaustive list of available alternative embodiments, whether presently known or later developed. Those skilled in the art may readily adopt one or more of the inventive aspects, concepts or features into additional embodiments and uses within the scope of the present inventions even if such embodiments are not expressly disclosed herein. Additionally, even though some features, concepts or aspects of the inventions may be described herein as being a preferred arrangement or method, such description is not intended to suggest that such feature is required or necessary unless expressly so stated. Still further, exemplary or representative values and ranges may be included to assist in understanding the present disclosure; however, such values and ranges are not to be construed in a limiting sense and are intended to be critical values or ranges only if so expressly stated. Moreover, while various aspects, features and concepts may be expressly identified herein as being inventive or forming part of an invention, such identification is not intended to be exclusive, but rather there may be inventive aspects, concepts and features that are fully described herein without being expressly identified as such or as part of a specific invention. Descriptions of exemplary methods or processes are not limited to inclusion of all steps as being required in all cases, nor is the order that the steps are presented to be construed as required or necessary unless expressly so stated.

We claim:

1. A massaging device having a variable stroke length, the massaging device comprising:

a motor having a motor shaft that rotates in response to energy applied to the motor;

a hydraulic lost motion system comprising:

a lost motion input that is configured to reciprocate over a fixed input reciprocation range in response to rotation of the motor shaft, wherein the lost motion input is an input piston configured to reciprocate within an input bore in response to rotation of the motor shaft;

a lost motion output that is configured to reciprocate over an output reciprocation range in response to reciprocation of the lost motion input, wherein the lost motion output is an output piston configured to reciprocate within an output bore in response to reciprocation of the input piston, the output bore fluidly connected to the input bore; and

a lost motion controller to control the output reciprocation range of the lost motion output, wherein the lost motion controller comprises:

a control bore fluidly connected to the input bore and the output bore;

a floating piston that selectively reciprocates within the control bore; and

an adjustment device configured to control a range of reciprocation of the floating piston within the control bore, the floating piston having at least a first, shorter range of reciprocation that causes the output piston to have a longer output reciprocation range, the floating piston having at least a second, longer range of reciprocation that causes the output piston to have a shorter output reciprocation range; and

a massaging head connected to the lost motion output, the massaging head configured to over a stroke range determined by the output reciprocation range of the lost motion output.

2. The massaging device of claim 1, wherein the range of reciprocation of the floating piston is continuously variable between the shorter range of reciprocation and the longer range of reciprocation.

3. The massaging device of claim 1, wherein the adjustment device comprises a cam having a surface that engages a surface of the floating piston to inhibit motion of the floating piston beyond a selected range limit.

4. The massaging device of claim 1, wherein the reciprocation of the massaging head is configured to occur at a rate in a range of 600 strokes per minute to 3,600 strokes per minute.

5. The massaging device of claim 4, wherein the massaging device includes a pushbutton that is configured to be selectively enabled to select a reciprocation rate from a plurality of preset reciprocation rates within the range of 600 strokes per minute to 3,600 strokes per minute.

6. A massaging device having a variable stroke length, the massaging device comprising:

a motor having a motor shaft that rotates in response to energy applied to the motor;

a flywheel coupled to the motor shaft to rotate with the motor shaft;

a hydraulic lost motion system comprising:

an input piston coupled to the flywheel, the input piston configured to reciprocate within an input bore over a fixed input reciprocation range in response to rotation of the flywheel;

an output piston, the output piston configured to reciprocate within an output bore over an output reciprocation range in response to reciprocation of the input piston;

a fluid passage that fluidly connects the input bore to the output bore;

an adjustment device configured to control the output reciprocation range of the output piston, the adjustment device comprising:

a floating piston that is configured to selectively move within an adjustment bore, the adjustment

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bore fluidly connected to the input bore and the output bore via the fluid passage; and
 an adjustment cam that is configured to control a range of movement of the floating piston within the adjustment bore, the adjustment cam having at least a first position such that the floating piston has a minimum range of movement that causes the output piston to have a maximum output reciprocation range, the adjustment cam having at least a second position such that the floating piston has a maximum range of movement that causes the output piston to have a minimum output reciprocation range; and
 a massaging head connected to the output piston, the massaging head configured to move over a stroke range determined by the output reciprocation range of the output piston.

7. The massaging device of claim 6, wherein the reciprocation range of the output piston is continuously variable between the minimum output reciprocation range and the maximum output reciprocation range.

8. The massaging device of claim 6, wherein the reciprocation of the massaging head is configured to occur at a rate in a range of 600 strokes per minute to 3,600 strokes per minute.

9. The massaging device of claim 8, wherein the massaging device includes a pushbutton that is configured to be selectively enabled to select a reciprocation rate from a plurality of preset reciprocation rates within the range of 600 strokes per minute to 3,600 strokes per minute.

10. A process for deep tissue massaging comprising:
 providing a massaging device comprising:
 a housing;
 a handle positioned on the housing;
 a motor within the housing;
 a piston having a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end operatively connected to the motor to reciprocate along a longitudinal axis, the piston having a minimum reciprocation stroke length and a maximum reciprocation stroke length;
 a quick release connection coupled to the distal end of the piston; and
 a first massaging head releasably coupled to the distal end of the piston via the quick release connection;
 operating the massaging device at a first reciprocation speed and at a predetermined reciprocation stroke length to provide a first deep tissue massage to predesignated muscles with the first massaging head, wherein the predetermined stroke length is varied by rotating a cam having a first rotational position that controls the stroke length to the minimum stroke length, having a

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second rotational position that controls the stroke length to the maximum stroke length, and having a plurality of intermediate rotational positions that control the stroke length to intermediate stroke lengths between the minimum stroke length and the maximum stroke length;
 switching massaging heads from the first massaging head to a second massaging head; and
 operating the massaging device at a second reciprocation speed to provide a second deep tissue massage with the second massaging head.

11. The deep tissue massaging process of claim 10, wherein the second deep tissue massage is provided to the predesignated muscles.

12. The deep tissue massaging process of claim 10, wherein the second deep tissue massage is directed to different portions of the predesignated muscles.

13. The deep tissue massaging process of claim 10, wherein the second deep tissue massage is directed to different muscles.

14. The deep tissue massaging process of claim 10, wherein the switching of massaging heads from the first massaging head to the second massaging head occurs without turning off the massaging device.

15. The deep tissue massaging process of claim 10, wherein the second deep tissue massage is at the predetermined reciprocation stroke length.

16. The deep tissue massaging process of claim 10, wherein the second deep tissue massage is provided at a reciprocation stroke length different from the predetermined reciprocation stroke length.

17. The deep tissue massage process of claim 10, wherein the predetermined stroke length is variable from a minimum stroke length to a maximum stroke length.

18. The deep tissue massage process of claim 10, wherein the first reciprocation speed is no more than 3,600 strokes per minute.

19. The deep tissue massage process of claim 10, wherein the first reciprocation speed is at least 600 strokes per minute.

20. The deep tissue massage process of claim 19, wherein the first reciprocation speed is no more than 3,600 strokes per minute.

21. The deep tissue massage process of claim 20, wherein the first reciprocation speed is variable in a range of 600 strokes per minute to 3,600 strokes per minute.

22. The deep tissue massage process of claim 21, wherein the first reciprocation speed is adjustable to a selected one of a plurality of preset reciprocation speeds in the range of 600 strokes per minute to 3,600 strokes per minute.

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