

126 of 172 DOCUMENTS

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FUTON MATTRESS COVER

INVENTOR: Te Selle, Chris J. - P.O. Box 884782, San Francisco, California, 94188, United States (US)**APPL-NO:** 604770 (10)**FILED-DATE:** August 15, 2003**LEGAL-REP:** GREENBERG & LIEBERMAN - 314 PHILADELPHIA AVE., TAKOMA PARK, Maryland, 20912**PUB-TYPE:** February 17, 2005 - Utility Patent Application Publication (A1)**PUB-COUNTRY:** United States (US)**US-MAIN-CL:** 5#482**US-ADDL-CL:** 5#37.1, 5#501**CL:** 5**IPC-MAIN-CL:** [07] A47G 009#02**ENGLISH-ABST:**

A cover placed on the futon over the bedding while the futon is in the extended or flat position. First, the user should smooth their bedding, and then place the cover over the bedding. Next, the user should place the troughs over their bedding and around the futon mattress. The cover tautly covers the bedding and the top of the futon mattress, as well as the side and partial underside of the bedding and futon mattress. The user may then fold the futon to sitting position and protect their bedding while sitting. The cover allows the user to use the futon as a couch without having to remove the bedding. In some embodiments of the present invention, the cover is made of a gripping fabric so the bedding does not slip or lump under the cover. Various embodiments hold the cover against the futon mattress and bedding, but common to all embodiments are deep troughs to contain the bedding and futon mattress. The deep troughs are maintained taut against the futon mattress and bedding.

NO-OF-CLAIMS: 13**NO-DRWNG-PP:** 3

SUMMARY:**BACKGROUND OF INVENTION**

[0001] The present invention is a futon mattress cover, more specifically a futon cover that can be placed on a futon mattress to protect bedding.

[0002] Futons have become a popular furniture choice for people who have a limited amount of space in their apartment, condominium or home. Often the futon is used as a guest bed, or in some instances as the only bed in the home. When a futon is used as the only bed in the home, and that futon is also used as a conventional place to sit, the bedding needs to be either removed or contained and covered. This inherent problem occurs because a futon is used as both a bed and a seat or a couch.

[0003] Futon covers exist, however, the inherent problem with existing futon covers is that they cover the futon completely on all sides, much like a pillowcase. This makes them a task to take on and take off of the futon, and thus, most futon beds are made up on top of the futon cover because removing bedding is simpler than removing the futon cover itself.

[0004] Restated, the user must apply the bedding to the futon in the evening in order to sleep, and remove the bedding in the morning to use the futon as a couch during the day. The user can also fold the futon to a couch position with the bedding still on the futon, but then they must allow any visitor to sit on their bedding. The last option available is to remove all of the bedding when the futon is to be used as a couch, but this leaves the problem of remaking the futon as a bed each night to accommodate the user. Therefore, a need has been established for a cover for the futon that can fit tautly over the bedding, protecting the bedding and the futon while it is in use as a couch and can be easily removed when access to the bedding is desired.

[0005] U.S. Pat. No. 3,438,068 issued to Anderson, et al., on Apr. 15, 1969 shows a Self Tucking Fitted Sheet. Anderson's invention is unlike the present invention because it has four extensions on each side to fold under the mattress and connect with hook and eye closures, and it is not intended to cover the bedding and the mattress but only the mattress. U.S. Pat. No. 4,245,365 issued to Large on Jan. 20, 1981 shows a Fitted Top Contour Sheet. Large's invention is unlike the present invention because it is not intended to cover the bedding, but instead, is intended for use directly on a mattress, and thus, does not have elastic disposed in certain ways to contain bedding.

[0006] U.S. Pat. No. 4,461,049 issued to Hammond on Jul. 24, 1984 shows a Fitted Sheet with Elastic Restraints. Hammond's invention is unlike the present invention because it is used directly on the mattress and it is disposable. U.S. Pat. No. 4,662,013 issued to Harrison shows a Fitted Contour Sheet for Mattresses. Harrison's invention is unlike the present invention because it is intended to fit directly on the mattress and is not intended to protect bedding while a futon or mattress is not in use.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 4,727,608 issued to Joyce on Mar. 1, 1988 shows a Fitted Bed Sheet and Method for Making the Same. Joyce's invention is unlike the present invention because it could not be used on a futon due to the hard plastic extensions used to tighten the sheet onto the mattress.

[0008] U.S. Pat. No. 5,325,555 issued to Whitley shows an Inelastic Mattress Covering With an Elastic Underskirt. Whitley's invention is unlike the present invention because it is a fitted sheet for attaching to a mattress with a top sheet attached, and is not intended to cover the bedding and the mattress, but the mattress itself.

[0009] U.S. Pat. No. 5,530,979 issued to Whitley on Jul. 2, 1996 shows a Mattress Covering. Whitley's invention is unlike the present invention because it is a mattress cover for protecting the mattress and adding extra padding under the sheets, but it does not provide a cover for the bedding on a futon or other mattress.

[0010] U.S. Pat. No. 6,098,219 issued to Milber on Aug. 8, 2000 shows a Bed Sheet Attachment System. Milber's invention is unlike the present invention because it is a system for making the bed in which the fitted sheet, top sheet, and over blankets as one connected member, and does not provide a cover for bedding on a bed or futon. As is shown there are a variety of mattress coverings, but none provide a cover for futon that can protect the bedding while the futon is used as a couch and, additionally will fit over the top of the futon, even if bedding is on the futon.

[0011] Conventional fitted sheets simply are not designed to contain futon bedding, especially with the pushes and shifts that occur when users sit upon a futon that has been made up to function as a bed. Conventional fitted sheets have elastic around a periphery of material that extends along the sides of a futon or mattress, and possibly slightly underneath. Bedding for the futon spills out of the sides of a fitted sheet because there is little if any material extending underneath the sides of the futon.

[0012] Conventional mattress pads do much better than fitted sheets at containing bedding on a futon, however, a mattress pad does so because it has elastic disposed along the sides of the futon, as well as underneath. This is functional, but far from aesthetically pleasing, and thus, there exists a need for an invention that functions (to keep futon bedding in place) as well as a mattress pad, but with the look of a fitted sheet.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0013] The present invention is a tight fitted cover for a futon mattress to protect bedding while the futon is in use as a couch. The cover is applied to the futon after the bedding has been applied, and protects the bedding from spills, crumbs, or other nuisances while the futon is folded in a seating position.

[0014] The cover is shaped to the same length and width as the futon mattress. The depth of the futon cover can be as long or deep as is necessary to accommodate the futon cushion and the bedding on the futon. The cover is placed on the futon over the bedding while the futon is in the extended or flat position. First, the user should smooth their bedding, and then place the cover over the bedding. Next, the user should fit the troughs over the sides of the futon and bedding.

[0015] The cover tautly covers the bedding and the top of the futon mattress. The user may then fold the futon to sitting position and protect their bedding while sitting in an upright position.

[0016] In the preferred embodiment, the cover has four troughs, a top trough, a bottom trough, a right trough and a left trough. The troughs are joined to each other by means of an elastic strip at each joint, which extends the corners of the cover in such a way as to accommodate the bedding on the futon. Each trough is cut at an angle to accommodate its adjoining trough and elastic. The elastic acts as an extension of each angle of the troughs and allows for taut fitting over the bedding applied to the futon mattress. The cover allows the user to use the futon as a couch without having to remove the bedding.

[0017] In some embodiments of the present invention, the cover is made of a gripping fabric so the bedding does not slip or lump under the cover. Additionally, the cover can be manufactured with pockets along the front of the cover so the user may add pillows or stuffing to the pockets to add extra cushioning to the futon. In this manner, the user can protect the bedding and make the futon more comfortable to sit on. The user may place pillows that they use while sleeping in the pockets, and serve the dual purposes of adding extra padding and having a convenient storage place for their pillows. The design of the cover covers the top, side, and a portion of the bottom of the mattress and bedding, thereby eliminating the need to remove the bedding from the futon frame when removing and replacing the cover. Additionally, the cover does not use laces or zippers eliminating the possibility of tangling the bedding or mattress in any hooking closures. The elastic joining the underside troughs stretches to cover the corners of the mattress and edges of the bedding, and allow for a tight fit when changing the position of the futon. The cover has troughs that keep the bedding from being visible, and also keep the cover in place.

[0018] An alternative embodiment has four troughs underneath the mattress wherein the troughs have elastic that

runs in a perimeter around the top edges of the troughs, and no elastic is present at the joints between the troughs. A third embodiment is essentially a combination of the first and second embodiments, such that elastic pieces join the four troughs, while the troughs also have elastic running along their top edge perimeter. A fourth embodiment could have elastic disposed at just the top edges of each trough at the point where the troughs join, without any other elastic. A fifth embodiment could have any of the aforementioned embodiments in combination with extra material at the points where the troughs join one another, so that the corners of the cover have "deep pockets." The commonality between all embodiments is the four troughs that can be disposed underneath the futon such that variable tension can be applied to put the present invention on and off a futon.

DRWDESC:**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS**

[0019] FIG. 1 shows a top view of the present invention on a folded futon.

[0020] FIG. 2 shows the bottom of the present invention laid out on a flat futon.

DETDESC:**DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

[0021] The present invention is a cover for a futon or other similar sitting and sleeping device. The present invention is placed over bedding, and allows the futon to be used as a seat or couch without removing the cover. The cover, preferably, has a non-slip surface on its underside or back surface so as to allow the cover to lie over top of the bedding without wrinkles or creases on the sitting surface.

[0022] FIG. 1 shows the cover (10) applied to the futon (15), over bedding. The cover (10) is shown having a printed material, but the fabric of the outer cover (10) can be constructed of any pattern or weight of fabric, depending on the needs, likes or dislikes of the user. Note that the cover (10) completely covers the futon so that the mattress of the futon (15) cannot be seen.

[0023] The cover (10) has four deep troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) that are disposed between its corners. Each of the four deep troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) can cover the futon's bedding (not shown in FIG. 1 because the bedding is under the cover (10)) and the conventional futon mattress (also not shown for the same reason). The cover (10) covers the bedding and futon mattress in a taught fashion so that the user may fold the futon into a sitting position, as shown in FIG. 1, and the futon may be used as a couch or seat without removing the bedding from the conventional futon mattress.

[0024] The four deep troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) are formed, as shown in FIG. 2, so that they fully cover the sides and partial bottom side of the futon mattress (60) and bedding (not shown). Each of the four deep troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) can cover the bedding (not shown) and the conventional futon mattress (60), completely obscuring the bedding (not shown) and futon mattress (60) from view.

[0025] Each of the four deep troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) is joined with elastic (120) to allow the cover to fit the futon mattress (60) and the bedding (not shown). In use, the deep troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) are pulled over and around the sides of the futon mattress (60) and the bedding (not shown) such the deep troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) still overlap and hold the futon mattress (60) and bedding (not shown) underneath the futon mattress (60) for at least several inches. The elastic (120) in the present invention joins the troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) to one another, as opposed to crimping corners as in a fitted sheet. The joint of the troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) is made by elastic (120) allowing the cover (10) to fit over the

bedding (not shown) in a tight manner. This is separate from the elastic means employed on fitted sheets because the elastic (120) creates horizontal forces across troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) to maintain a taught fit on the bedding (not shown) and futon mattress (60) so that the bedding (not shown) does not spill from underneath the cover (10) during daily sitting use of the futon.

[0026] Instead of using the elastic (120), buttons, eyelets, laces, Velcro[R], Velcro straps[R], drawstring, hook and eyelet may be used, either all the way around the entire inner edge (130) of the cover (10) or solely at the joints of troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) in place or in addition to elastic (120). Importantly, though, the troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) would still be present in any embodiment so that the force created by the elastic seam would pull troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) toward the underside center of the futon to prevent bedding spillage. Essentially, in alternative embodiments, so long as taught troughs (20, 30, 40, 50) are maintained, the present invention should function.

[0027] The present invention is not limited to the sole embodiments described above, but instead includes any and all embodiments of the following claims.

ENGLISH-CLAIMS:

Return to Top of Patent

1. A cover to hold a futon mattress and bedding, comprising: a top portion; at least one trough, in communication with said top portion; and a means for maintaining said at least one trough taught against the futon mattress and bedding.
2. The cover of claim 1, further comprising a means for maintaining said top portion taught against the futon mattress and bedding.
3. The cover of claim 1, wherein said at least one trough is four troughs.
4. The cover of claim 1, wherein said means for maintaining said at least one trough taught against the futon mattress and bedding is elastic.
5. The cover of claim 1, wherein said means for maintaining said at least one trough taught against the futon mattress and bedding is hook and loop type fasteners.
6. The cover of claim 1, wherein said means for maintaining said at least one trough taught against the futon mattress and bedding is ties.
7. The cover of claim 1, wherein said means for maintaining said at least one trough taught against the futon mattress and bedding is snaps.
8. The cover of claim 3, wherein said four troughs are joined together to remain taught underneath the futon mattress and bedding.
9. The cover of claim 8, wherein said four troughs are joined together via elastic.
10. The cover of claim 8, wherein said four troughs are joined together via one radius emanating from each corner formed between every two of said four troughs.
11. The cover of claim 8, wherein said four troughs are held together via elastic disposed along the edge of each of said four troughs.
12. The cover of claim 11, wherein said four troughs are joined together via elastic.
13. The cover of claim 12, wherein said four troughs are joined together via one radius emanating from each corner

formed between every two of said four troughs.

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