A bag including a bag body having an inlet and defining a storage compartment, and a resiliently flexible strap attached to the bag body and biased to extend away from the bag body to facilitate insertion of an arm therethrough. A spring member, such as a strip of resiliently flexible material, extends substantially the length of the strap, such as in a sleeve or padding thereof. A fastener may be used to attach the strap adjacent to the bag body so as to substantially close an opening between the strap and the bag body.
BAG HAVING A SELF-POSITIONING STRAP

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention generally relates to bags having straps adapted to be carried on one’s shoulder or back. More particularly, the present invention relates to a bag having a self-positioning strap to facilitate insertion of an arm therethrough.

[0002] Many bags such as knapsacks, backpacks, golf bags, etc., have one or more straps extending therefrom for insertion of an arm therethrough such that the bag can be carried on one or more shoulders of the individual. Such bags are used to carry items, such as golf clubs, text books, etc. It is much easier and more comfortable to carry the weight of these items on one’s shoulders rather than carrying the bag by hand.

[0003] Such bags typically have one or more straps of sufficient length so as to form an opening between the strap and the bag when the strap is pulled away from the bag so as to enable an individual to insert his or her arm therethrough and position the bag on his or her shoulder. However, the current design of such straps is that the straps are comprised of materials such as fabric or padding that fall towards the bag or towards the ground in a relaxed state. Thus, the individual must lift the strap up away from the bag in order to create the opening through which his or her arm can be inserted to properly position the bag. When placing the bag on both shoulders, such as a knapsack having two straps or a golf bag having dual shoulder straps, the task can be quite complicated, painful and at times, may cause injury.

[0004] Accordingly, there is a continuing need for a strap which is self-positioning such that in a relaxed state the strap provides the one or more openings necessary for the individual to insert his or her arm therethrough and properly position the bag on his or her shoulders and back. The present invention provides these needs and provides other related advantages.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The present invention resides in a bag having a self-positioning strap so as to overcome the drawback of current bags, as described above. The bag generally comprises a bag body having an inlet and defining a storage compartment. A resiliently flexible strap is attached to the body and biased to extend away from the bag body to facilitate insertion of an arm therethrough.

[0006] The strap includes a spring member, such as a strip of resiliently flexible material. The strip of resiliently flexible material extends substantially the length of the strap and is typically disposed within a sleeve of the strap. Preferably, the strip of resiliently flexible material is disposed within padding of the sleeve. Preferably, the strap is adjustable in length.

[0007] The bag may include a fastener for attaching the strap to the bag body so as to substantially close the opening between the strap and the bag body. Such fastener may comprise a strip of material having closures, such as hook and loop tape, at opposite ends thereof. In certain instances, the strips are attached to the bag body for storage using means to hold the strap generally transverse to the bag body. Such means may be in addition to the resiliently flexible material.

[0008] In a particularly preferred embodiment, the bag comprises a golf bag, and the strap comprises a dual shoulder strap having two openings for accommodating a golfer’s shoulders therethrough. Such a shoulder strap typically comprises first and second straps having ends thereof attached to the golf bag and extending across one another to form the two openings. The first and second straps may be joined to one another along a length thereof. The golf bag may include extendable support legs pivotally attached thereto for supporting the golf bag in an upright position.

[0009] Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following more detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] The accompanying drawings illustrate the invention. In such drawings:

[0011] FIG. 1 is a side perspective view of a golf bag having a self-positioning strap in accordance with the present invention;

[0012] FIG. 2 is an opposite side view of the golf bag and strap of FIG. 1;

[0013] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the golf bag having the legs brought towards the golf bag, and illustrating, in phantom, resiliently flexible members of the straps;

[0014] FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken generally along line 4-4 of FIG. 3, illustrating a resiliently flexible member inserted into a strap of the bag;

[0015] FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken generally along line 5-5 of FIG. 1, illustrating a strap length adjustment buckle;

[0016] FIGS. 6-8 are perspective views illustrating placement of the bag on a golfer’s shoulders, in accordance with the present invention;

[0017] FIG. 9 is a rear perspective view of the golf bag supported on the individual’s back and shoulders;

[0018] FIG. 10 is a front perspective view of the golf bag supported by the golfer;

[0019] FIG. 11 is an enlarged elevational view of area “11” of FIG. 1, illustrating a fastener used in accordance with the present invention; and

[0020] FIG. 12 is a perspective view of the golf bag, with the strap fastened adjacent thereto.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0021] As shown in the accompanying drawings for purposes of illustration, the present invention resides in a self-positioning strap, generally referred to by the reference number 10, which is biased to extend away from a body 12 of a bag 14, as will be more fully described herein.

[0022] With reference now to FIGS. 1-3, the invention is illustrated and described with respect to a particularly preferred embodiment, a golf bag 14. However, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art, that the self-position-
ing strap 10 of the present invention can be incorporated into other bags, such as back-packs, handbags, etc. In every instance, the strap 10 is designed and configured such that it is biased to extend away from the bag body 12 to facilitate insertion of an arm with ease therethrough, without strain or contorting the arm.

[0023] In the illustrated particularly preferred embodiment, the golf bag 14 is of the carrying type, such that the golfer carries the golf bag and golf clubs (not shown) during the round of golf. Preferably, the golf bag 14 includes extendible support legs 16 which are pivotally connected to the golf bag body 12 and pivot outwardly as the base 18 of the golf bag 14 is placed on the ground, as is well known in the art. The extended legs 16 and the base 18 of the golf bag 14 form a tripod such that the golf bag 14 is held in an upright position at a slight angle, as illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2. When the golf bag 14 is lifted from the ground, or positioned vertical, as illustrated in FIG. 3, the support legs 16 are pivoted back towards the golf bag body 12. The mechanisms for accomplishing this are generally well-known.

[0024] The strap 10 illustrated in the accompanying drawings is of a dual shoulder strap design. In the past, golf bags had a single strap for which to be carried. However, it has been found that the strain placed on the shoulder, neck and back from the single strap can be detrimental to one’s health. Accordingly, newer golf bags have a dual strap, as illustrated, so as to more evenly distribute the weight of the golf bag 14 and the golf clubs and equipment stored therein along both shoulders and the back, as illustrated in FIGS. 10 and 11. This design can also be used for a single strap bag.

[0025] As illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2, the dual shoulder strap 10 comprises first and second straps 18 and 20 which extend across from one another to form two openings 22 and 24 through which the golfer inserts his or her arms, as will be more fully discussed herein. In the illustrated embodiment, the straps 18 and 20 are joined to one another along their respective lengths at point 26. This junction 26 is usually positioned within the center of the back, between the shoulder blades of the golfer when the bag 14 is placed on the golfer’s back.

[0026] Opposite ends 28 and 30 of the first strap 18 are connected to the bag body 12. Similarly, opposite ends 32 and 34 of the second strap 20 are connected to the bag body 12. Preferably, the straps 18 and 20 are adjustable in length so as to accommodate different users. As illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 5, each strap 18 and 20 is preferably associated with a buckle 36 and 38 for adjusting the length of the straps 18 or 20. As illustrated in FIG. 5, the buckle 36 is attached directly to the bag body 12 by appropriate stitching or other fastening 40 and the end 32 of the strap 20 is fed through the buckle 36 so as to adjust the operable length of the strap 20. Adjustment of the first strap 18 using buckle 38 is accomplished in a similar manner.

[0027] With reference now to FIGS. 3 and 4, the straps 18 and 20 are comprised of or include a resiliently flexible material having spring-like characteristics. In a particularly preferred embodiment, as illustrated, the straps 18 and 20 are comprised of hollow sleeves 42, such as water repellent nylon material or the like. For comfort purposes, the straps 18 and 20 are usually padded. Thus, padding 44, such as a closed or open cell foam, or the like, is inserted in the sleeves 42. An elongated strip of resiliently flexible material 46 is disposed within the padding 44. Such material can comprise any material which has resilient and memory flexible qualities so as to bias the strap 18 or 20 away from the bag body 12 so that the strap 10 can be more easily worn.

[0028] In a particularly preferred embodiment, the strip of resiliently flexible material 46 comprises a thin strip of metal or plastic having spring-like characteristics and which extend substantially the length of the straps 18 and 20. Such strips of spring-like metal or plastic have memory and are used in “pop-up” tents and the like. Such tents are folded such that they can be stored in a relatively compact state. However, when thrown in the air or unfolded slightly, they spring into a predetermined state. This same concept is utilized in the strap 10 of the present invention wherein in a relaxed state the strap 10 is “sprung” so as to extend outwardly and generally transverse to the bag body 12.

[0029] With reference now to FIGS. 2 and 3, it has been found that due to the size and weight of the dual shoulder strap 10 when applied to a golf bag 14, that the strap 10, although having “pop-up” characteristics, tends to lean towards one side of the golf bag body 12. Accordingly, supporting means 50 and 52 are incorporated between the straps 18 and 20 and the bag body 12 so as to hold the strap 10 generally transverse to the bag body 12. Such support means 50 and 52 can comprise any support member suitable for such purpose. In the illustrated example in FIGS. 2 and 3, the clips 50 and 52 can be sewn directly to the bag body 12 in a manner so as to hold the straps 18 and 20 and prevent them from pivoting over the clips 50 and 52.

[0030] With reference now to FIGS. 6-10, when the strap 10 is in its relaxed and outwardly biased state, as illustrated in FIGS. 1-3, a golfer 54, or other user of another type of bag, is able to insert his or her arm 56 through an opening 22 created between the bag body 12 and straps 18 or 20 in an easy manner. The strap 18 or 20 are then positioned over the user’s shoulder 58, as illustrated in FIG. 7. The user’s opposite arm 60 is then extended through the other opening 24 so that the other strap 18 or 20 can be positioned on the golfer’s opposite shoulder 62, as illustrated in FIGS. 8 and 9. It will be appreciated that it is much easier to extend the second arm 60 through the second hole 24 with the strap 10 biased outwardly as compared to traditional straps where the strap in its relaxed state hangs downwardly and toward the bag body 12.

[0031] In a particularly preferred embodiment, wherein the bag 14 comprises a golf bag, the dual shoulder strap is positioned on the user’s shoulders 58 and 62 so as to evenly distribute the weight of the golf bag body 12 and related equipment and golf clubs over the user’s back and shoulders. As the golf bag body 12 extends generally downwardly from the golfer 54, the strap 10 is at a relaxed or near relaxed state when positioned on the golfer 54.

[0032] The reverse steps are taken in order to remove the golf bag 14 from the user’s back and shoulders. This results in the golf bag being positioned uprightly with the strap tend extending generally transverse to the golf bag body 12, as illustrated in FIG. 6. When resting the golf bag, the golf bag body 12 is tipped at an angle until the legs 16 are pivoted outwardly so as to support the golf bag body 12 at an inclined angle, as illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2. It will be noted that the strap 10 extends outwardly for easy insertion of the golfer’s arms through the openings 22 and 24 thereof.
[0033] With reference now to FIGS. 1, 11 and 12, as it is not practical to transport or store the bags 14 with the strap 10 extended therefrom, the bag body 12 has a fastener 64 associated therewith for attaching a strap 10 adjacent to the bag body 12 so as to substantially close the openings 22 and 24 between the strap 10 and the bag body 12. With reference to FIG. 11, the fastener 64 in a particularly preferred embodiment comprises a strap 66 having appropriate fasteners 68 and 70. Such fasteners 68 and 70 are preferably hook and loop tape fasteners, but could comprise snaps, a buckle, or any other appropriate fastening need. Thus, the strap 10 is pushed toward the bag body 12 and the strap 66 extended around the strap 10 and fastened into place to securely hold the strap 10 adjacent to the bag body 12. Upon releasing the fastener 64, the strap 10 extends outwardly into its biased position away from the bag body 12.

[0034] Although an embodiment has been described in detail for purposes of illustration, various modifications may be made without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Accordingly, the invention is not to be limited, except as by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:
1. A bag having a self-positioning strap, comprising:
a bag body having an inlet and defining a storage compartment; and
a resiliently flexible strap attached to the bag body and biased to extend away from the bag body to facilitate insertion of an arm thereof.
2. The bag of claim 1, wherein the strap includes a spring member associated therewith.
3. The bag of claim 2, wherein the spring member comprises a strip of resiliently flexible material extending substantially the length of the strap and having spring characteristics.
4. The bag of claim 3, wherein the strap comprises a sleeve, and wherein the strip of resiliently flexible material is disposed within the sleeve.
5. The bag of claim 4, including padding within the sleeve, wherein the strip of resiliently flexible material is disposed within the padding.
6. The bag of claim 1, including a fastener for attaching the strap adjacent to the bag body so as to substantially close an opening between the strap and the bag body.
7. The bag of claim 6, wherein the fastener comprises a strip of material having closures on opposite ends thereof.
8. The bag of claim 7, wherein the closures comprise hook and loop tape.
9. The bag of claim 1, wherein the strap is attached to the bag body using means to hold the strap generally transverse to the bag body.
10. The bag of claim 3, wherein the bag comprises a golf bag.
11. The bag of claim 10, wherein the strap comprises a dual shoulder strap having two openings for accommodating a golfer's shoulders therethrough.
12. The bag of claim 10, wherein the strap is adjustable in length.
13. The bag of claim 11, wherein the dual shoulder strap comprises first and second straps having ends thereof attached to the golf bag and extending across one another to form the two openings.
14. The bag of claim 13, wherein the first and second straps are joined to one another along a respective length thereof.
15. The bag of claim 10, wherein the golf bag includes extendible support legs pivotally attached thereto for supporting the golf bag in an upright position.
16. The bag of claim 10, including a fastener for attaching the strap adjacent to the golf bag body so as to substantially close an opening between the strap and the golf bag body.
17. The bag of claim 16, wherein the fastener comprises a strip of material having closures on opposite ends thereof.
18. The bag of claim 17, wherein the closures comprise hook and loop tape.
19. A bag having a self-positioning strap, comprising:
a bag body having an inlet and defining a storage compartment;
a strap attached to the bag body and having a sleeve and a strip of resiliently flexible material having spring characteristics extending substantially the length of the sleeve so as to bias the strap to extend away from the bag body to facilitate insertion of an arm therethrough; and
a fastener for attaching the strap adjacent to the bag body so as to substantially close an opening between the strap and the bag body.
20. The bag of claim 19, including padding within the sleeve, wherein the strip of resiliently flexible material is disposed within the padding.
21. The bag of claim 19, wherein the fastener comprises a strip of material having closures on opposite ends thereof.
22. The bag of claim 19, wherein the strap is adjustable in length.
23. The bag of claim 19, wherein the bag comprises a golf bag, and wherein the strap comprises a dual shoulder strap having two openings for accommodating a golfer's shoulders therethrough.
24. The bag of claim 23, wherein the dual shoulder strap comprises first and second straps having ends thereof attached to the golf bag and extending across one another to form the two openings.
25. The bag of claim 24, wherein the first and second straps are joined to one another along a respective length thereof.
26. The bag of claim 23, wherein the golf bag includes extendible support legs pivotally attached thereto for supporting the golf bag in an upright position.
27. A golf bag having a self-positioning strap, comprising:
a bag body having an inlet and defining a storage compartment adapted for storing golf clubs therein;
a dual shoulder strap having two openings for accommodating a golfer's shoulders therethrough attached to the bag body and having a strip of resiliently flexible material having spring characteristics extending substantially the length of the strap so as to bias the strap to extend away from the bag body to facilitate insertion of arms through openings thereof; and
a fastener for attaching the strap adjacent to the bag body, so as to substantially close an opening between the strap and the bag body.

28. The bag of claim 27, wherein the strap comprises sleeves having padding, wherein the strip of resiliently flexible material is disposed within the padding.

29. The bag of claim 27, wherein the fastener comprises a strip of material having closures on opposite ends thereof.

30. The bag of claim 27, wherein the strap is adjustable in length.

31. The bag of claim 27, wherein the dual shoulder strap comprises first and second straps having ends thereof attached to the golf bag and extending across one another to form the two openings.

32. The bag of claim 31, wherein the first and second straps are joined to one another along a respective length thereof.

33. The bag of claim 27, wherein the golf bag includes extendible support legs pivotally attached thereto for supporting the golf bag in an upright position.

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