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Bullard

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(54) **JEWELRY MANDREL PLIERS AND METHOD OF USING SAME**

(71) Applicant: **Wubbers, LLC**, Lubbock, TX (US)

(72) Inventor: **Patricia Bullard**, Lubbock, TX (US)

(73) Assignee: **Wubbers, LLC**, South Lake, TX (US)

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(51) **Int. Cl.**

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B21F 1/00	(2006.01)
B21D 53/44	(2006.01)
B25B 7/08	(2006.01)
B25B 7/12	(2006.01)
B21D 11/06	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC ***B25B 7/02*** (2013.01); ***B21D 53/44*** (2013.01); ***B21F 1/002*** (2013.01); ***B25B 7/08*** (2013.01); ***B25B 7/12*** (2013.01); *B21D 11/06* (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

CPC .. B21F 1/002; B21F 1/06; B21F 15/04; B25B 7/02; A44C 27/00

See application file for complete search history.

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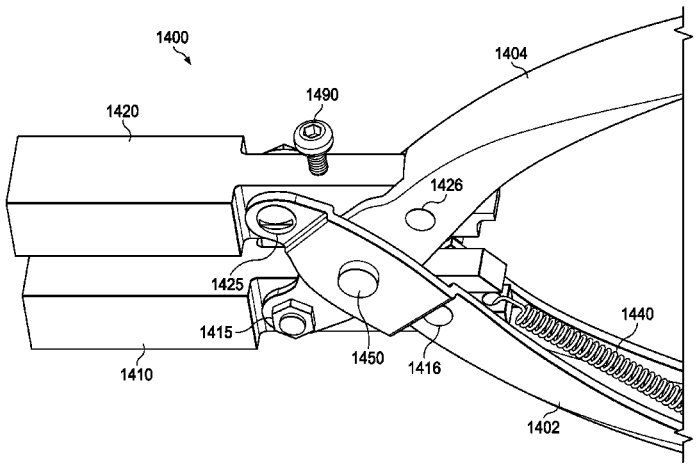
Primary Examiner — Debra Sullivan
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Vincent J. Allen; Carstens & Cahoon, LLP

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present invention provides a mandrel tool and method for more efficiently and consistently forming various shapes of material. In one embodiment of the invention, a pair of pliers having mandrel jaws that are shaped with a uniform cross sectional area throughout a length of the mandrel jaw is used to replace the traditional tapered mandrel. Because the mandrel jaws have a uniform cross sectional area, the wire, for example, can be wrapped multiple times around the mandrel jaw when it is desired to produce multiples of the same shape. For added versatility, the pliers can have opposing mandrel jaws, with different size cross sectional area.

44 Claims, 13 Drawing Sheets



Related U.S. Application Data

which is a continuation of application No. 13/491,755, filed on Jun. 8, 2012, now Pat. No. 9,227,304.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/494,705, filed on Jun. 8, 2011.

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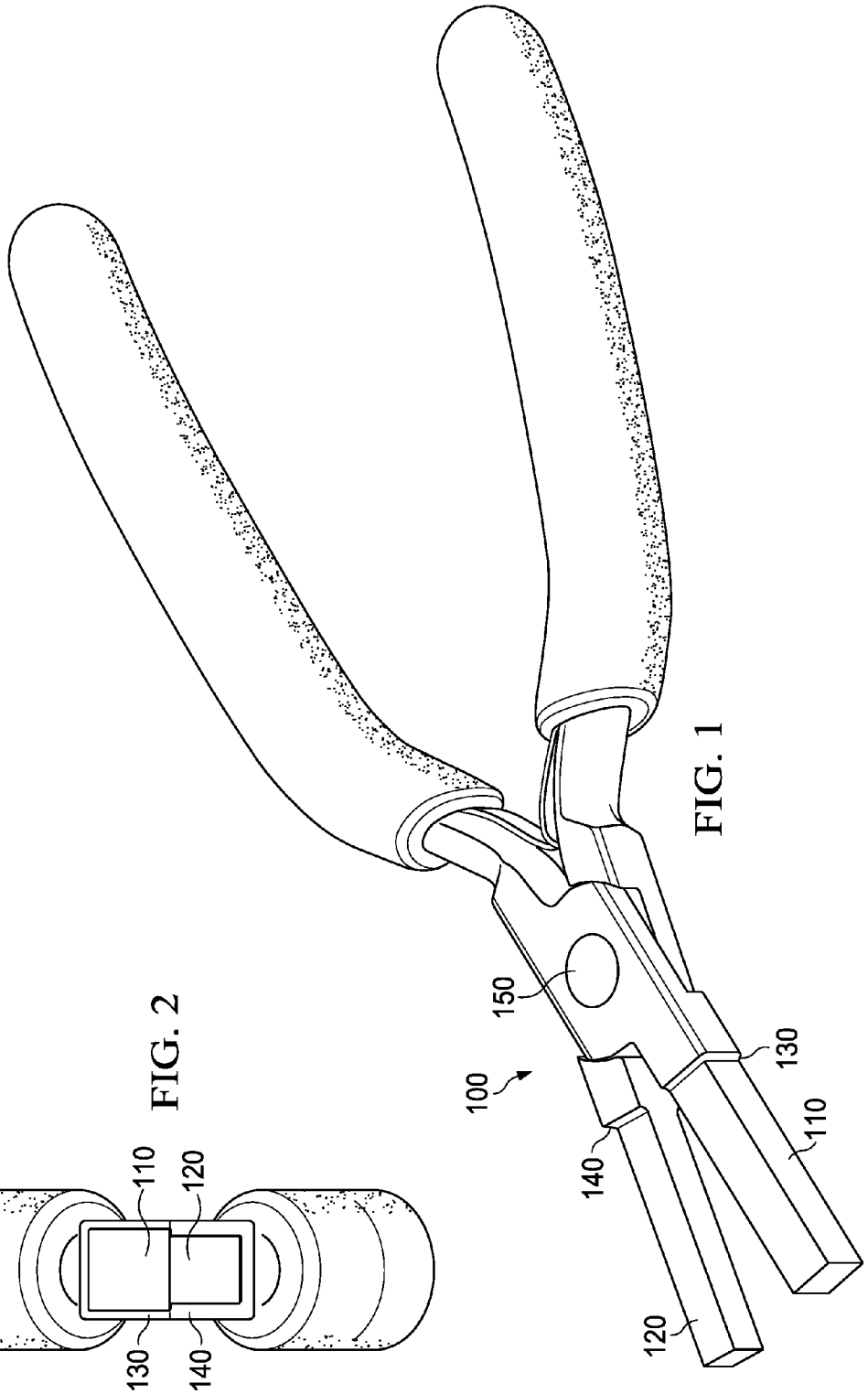

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

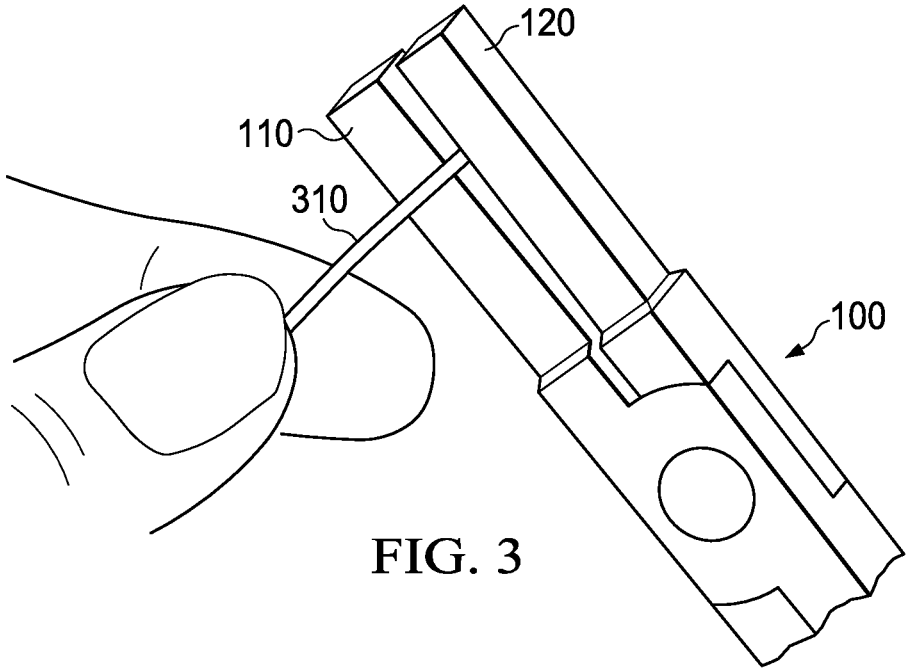

FIG. 3

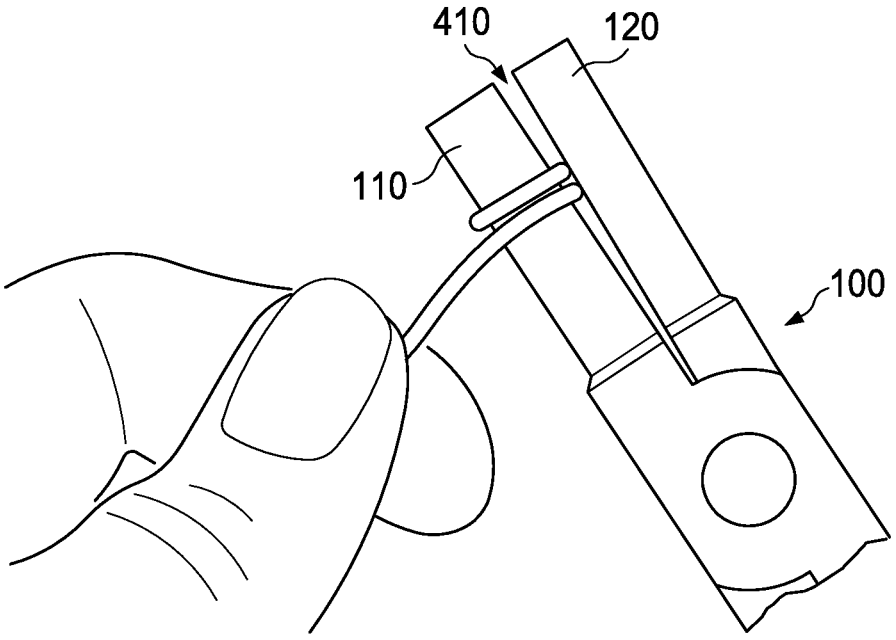

FIG. 4

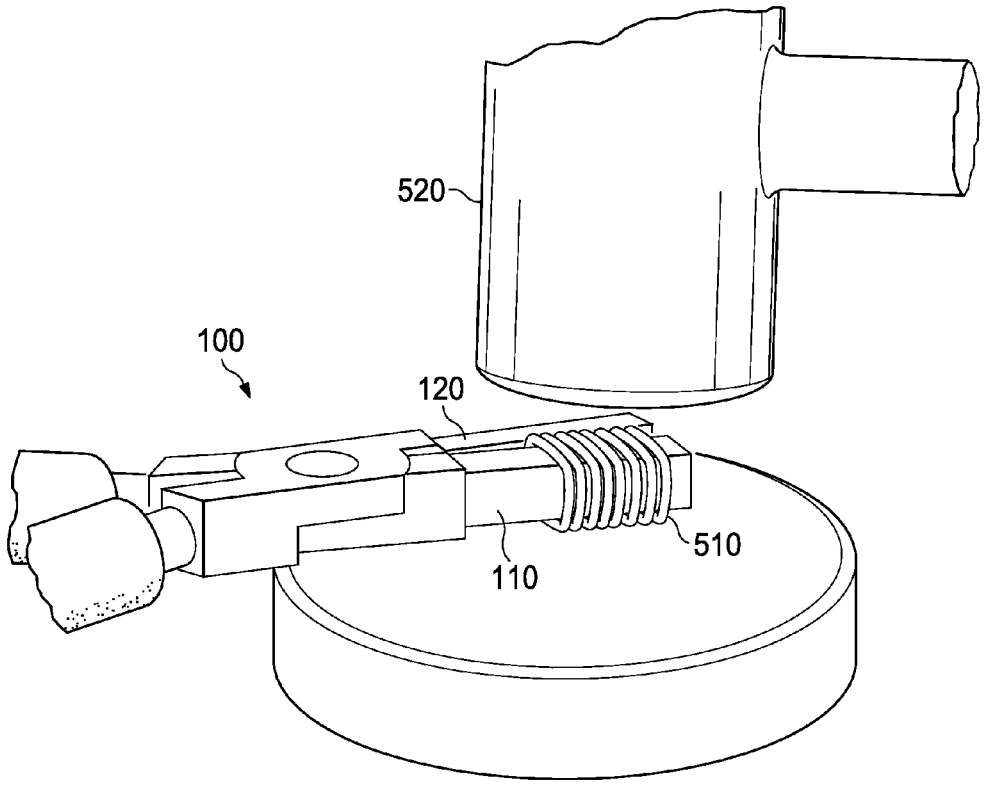

FIG. 5

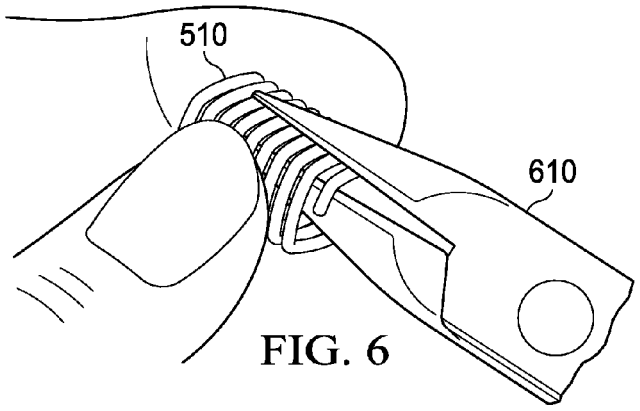

FIG. 6

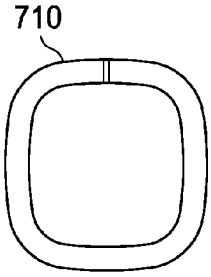

FIG. 7

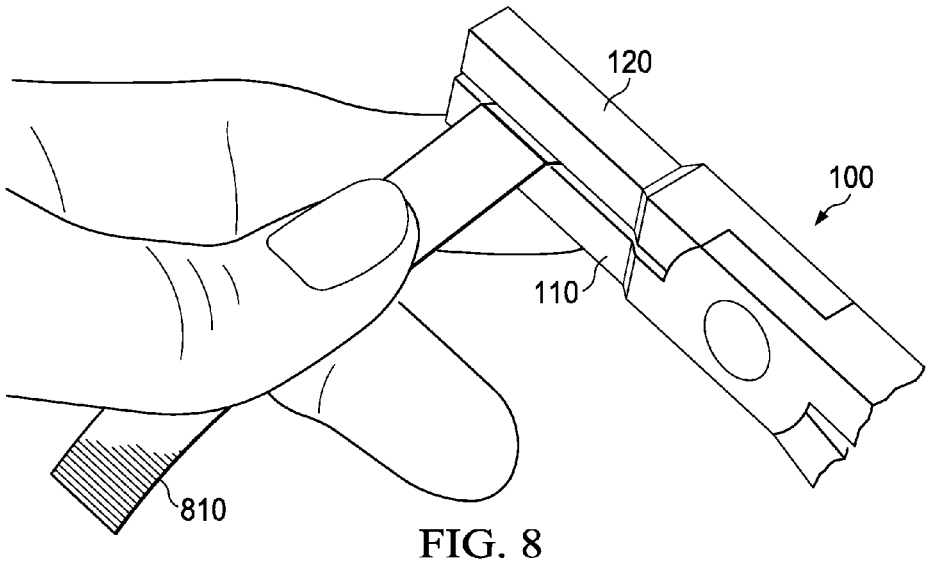

FIG. 8

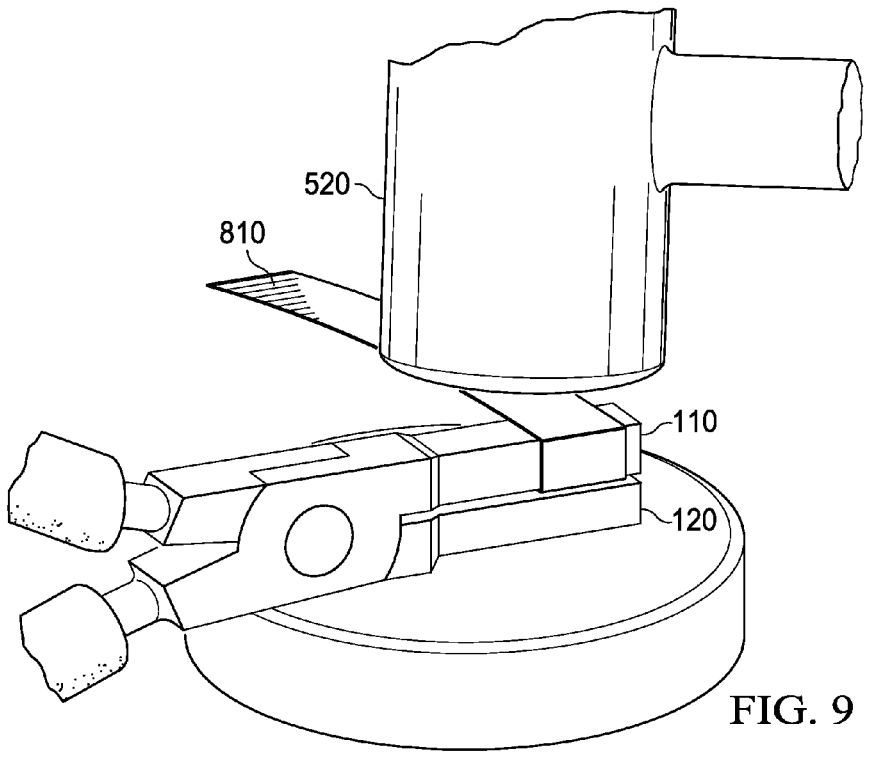

FIG. 9

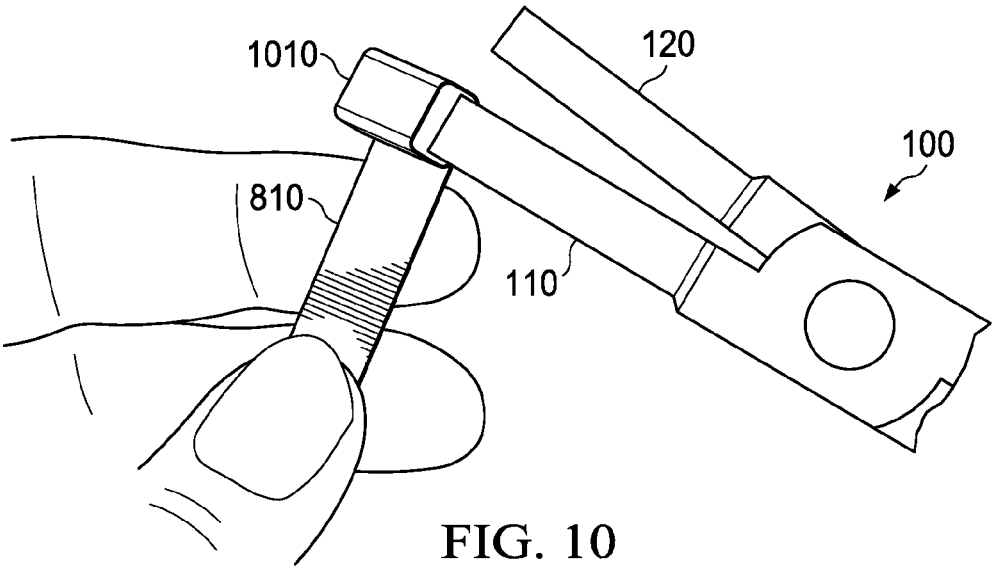

FIG. 10

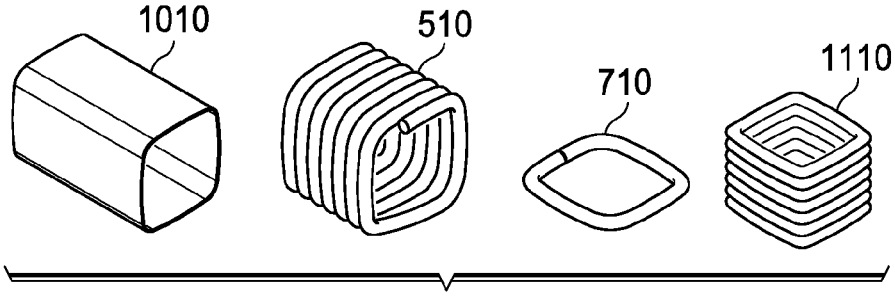

FIG. 11

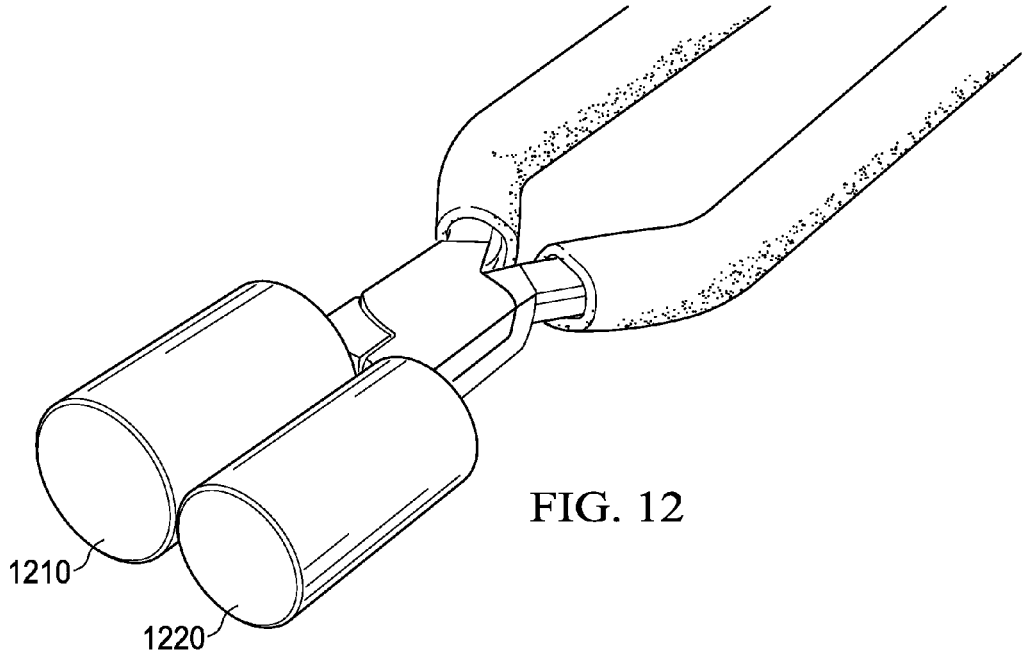

FIG. 12

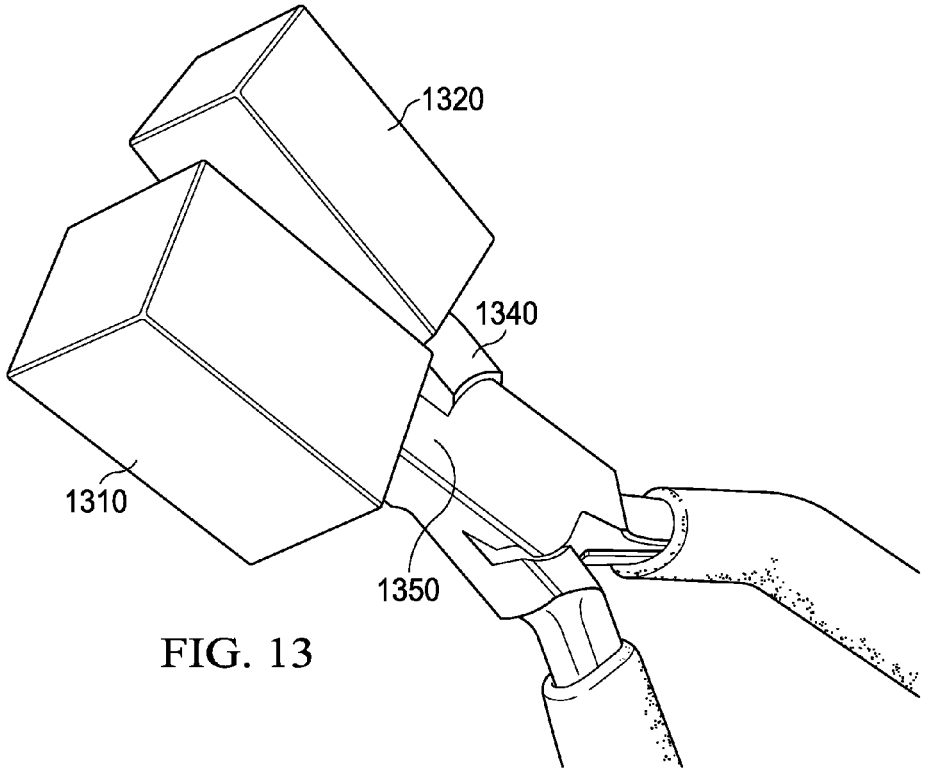

FIG. 13

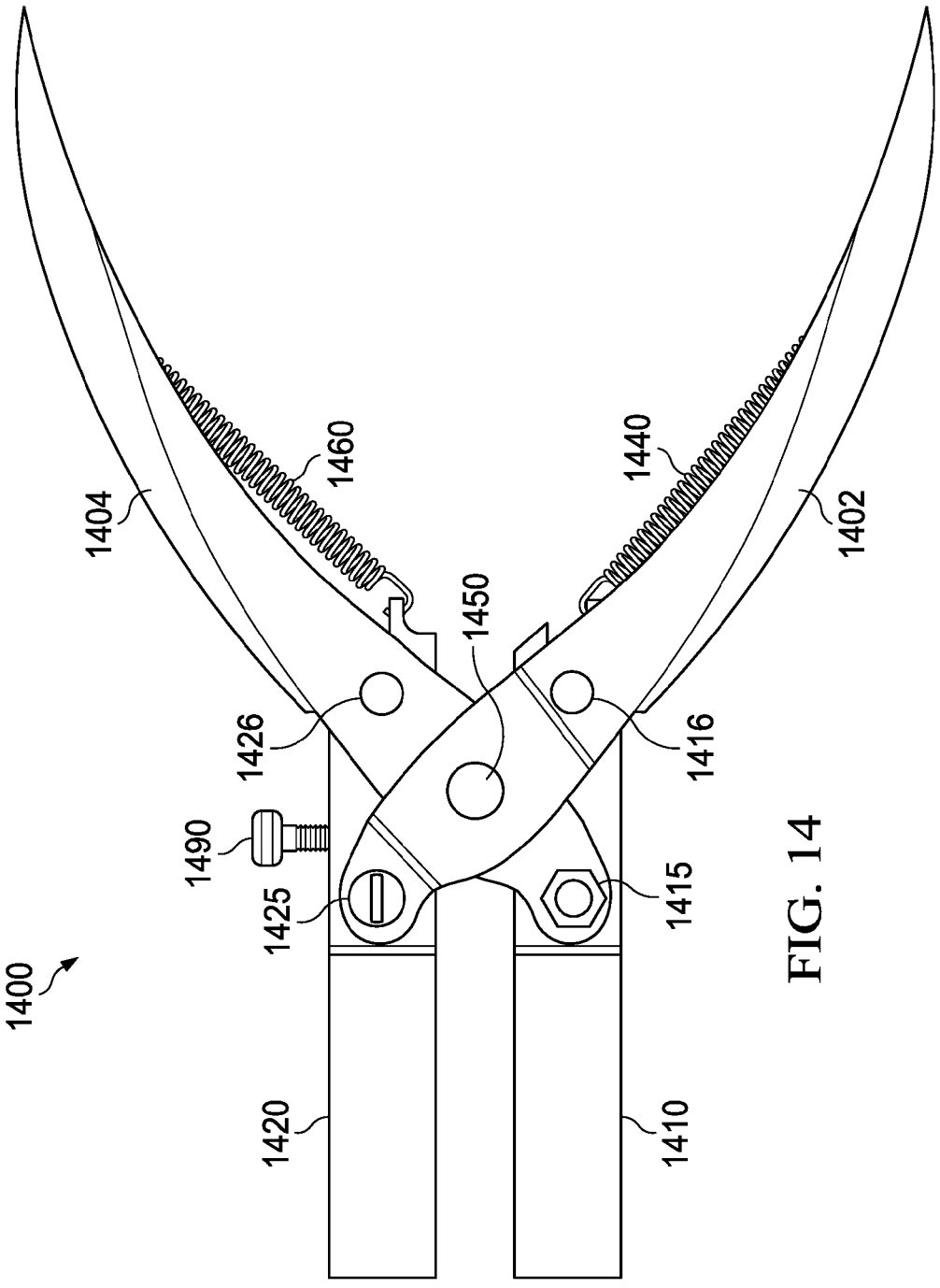
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FIG. 14

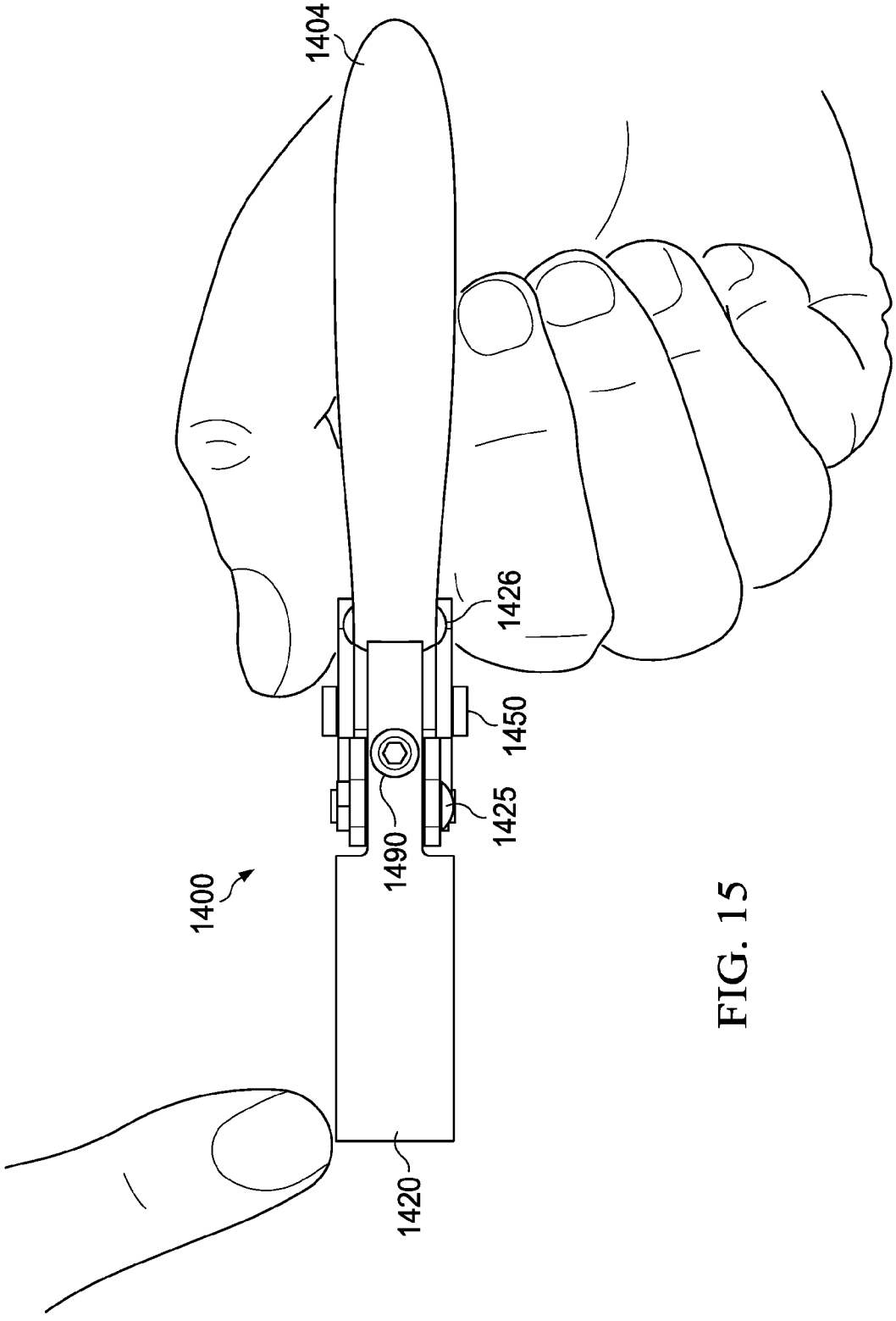

FIG. 15

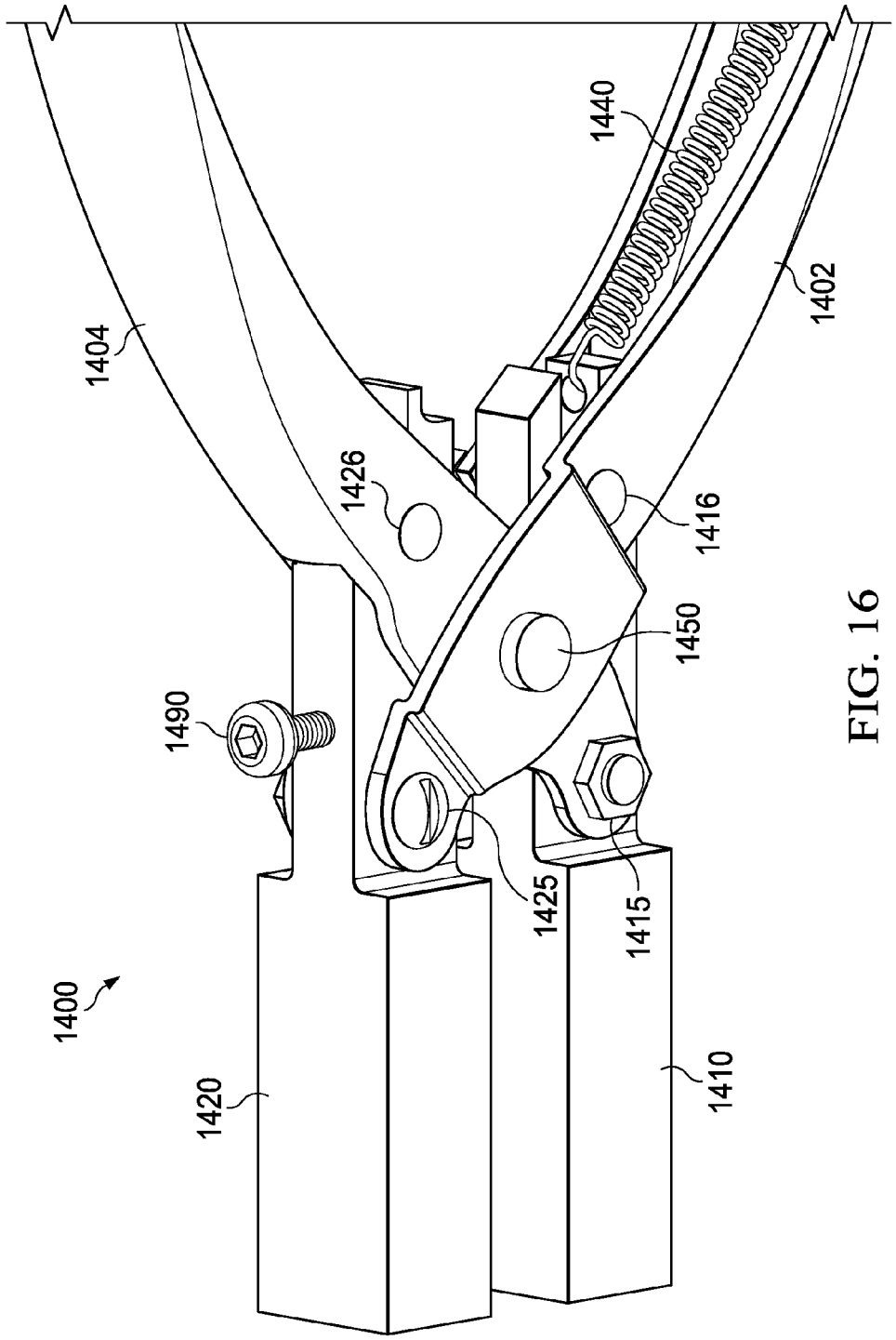

FIG. 16

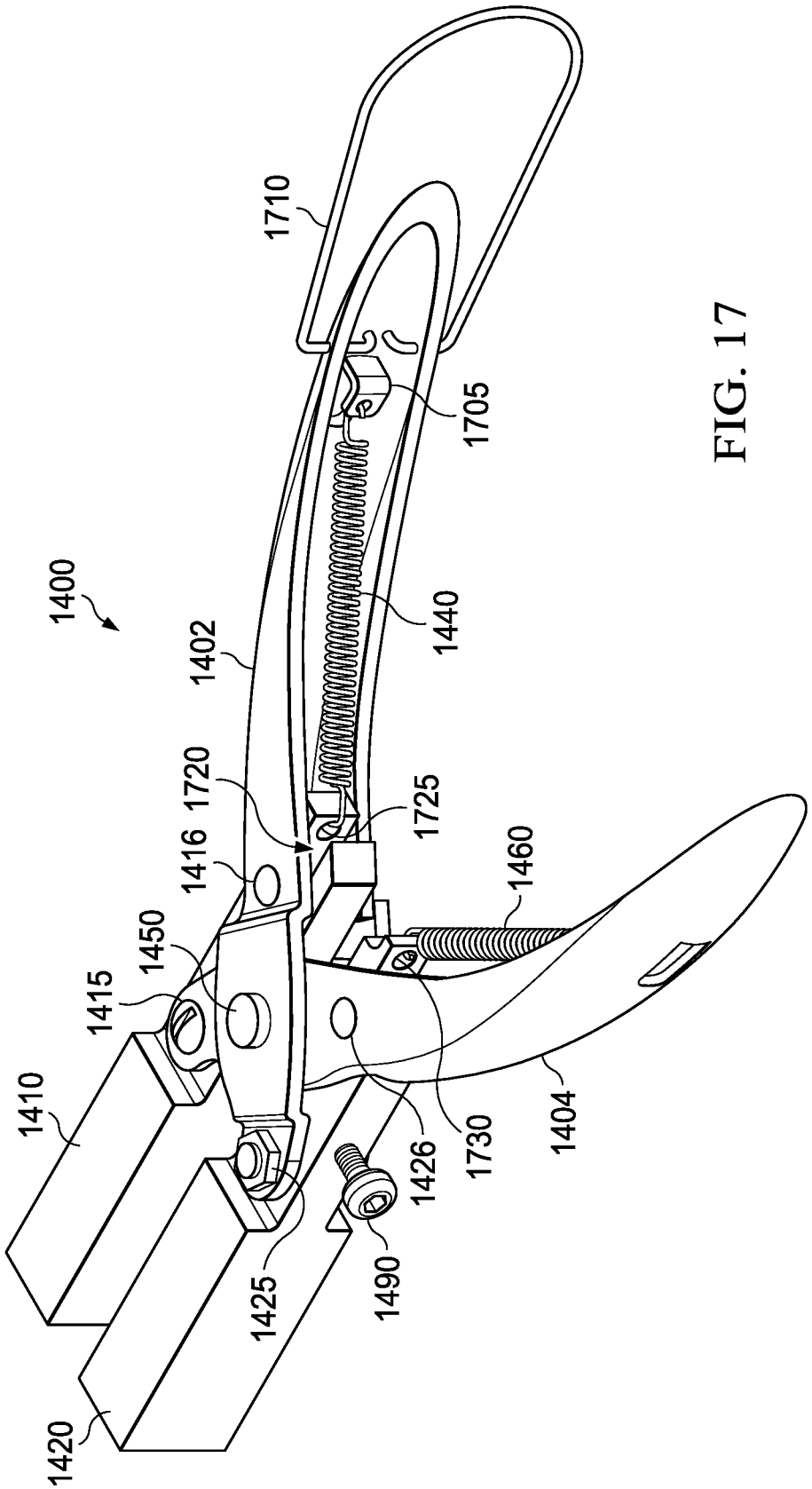
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FIG. 17

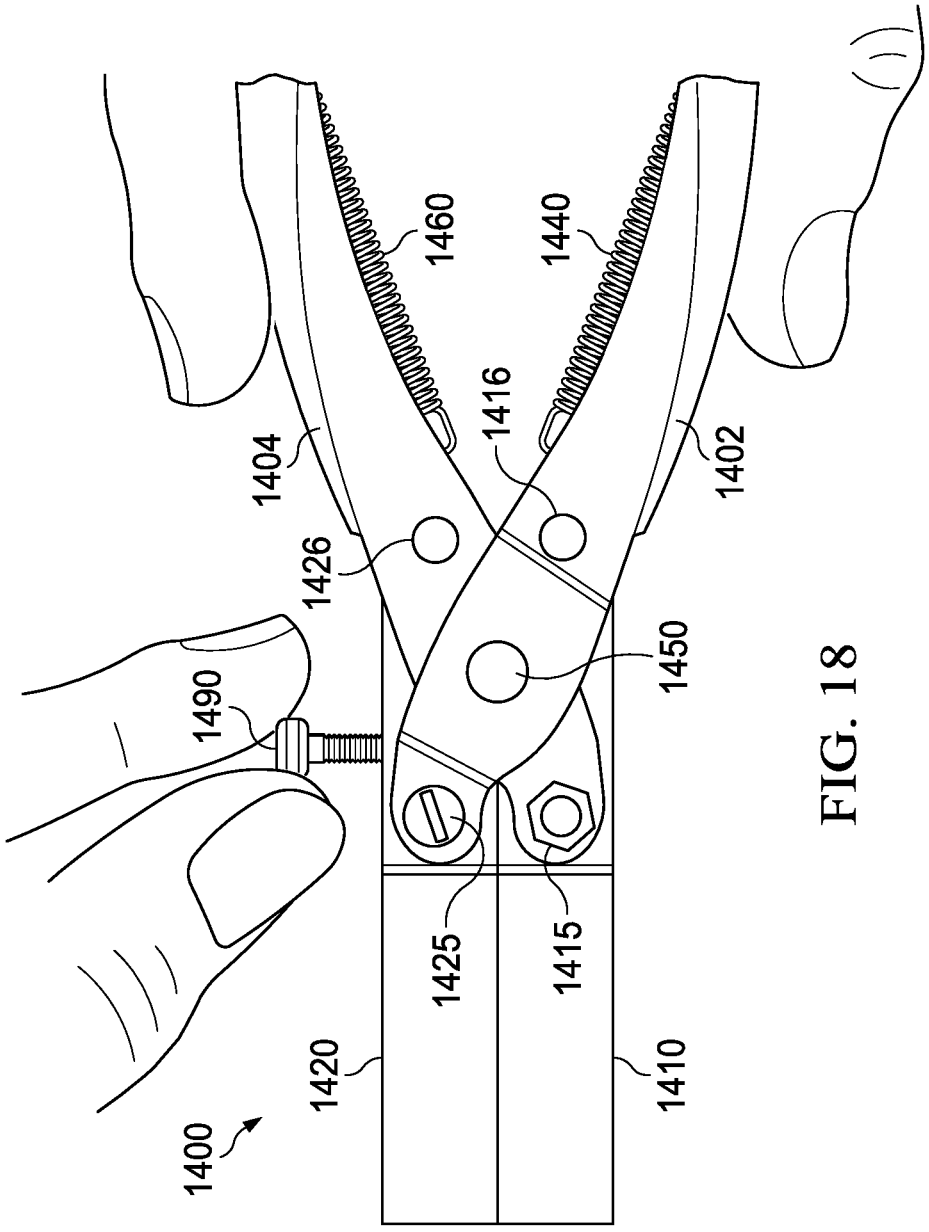
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FIG. 18

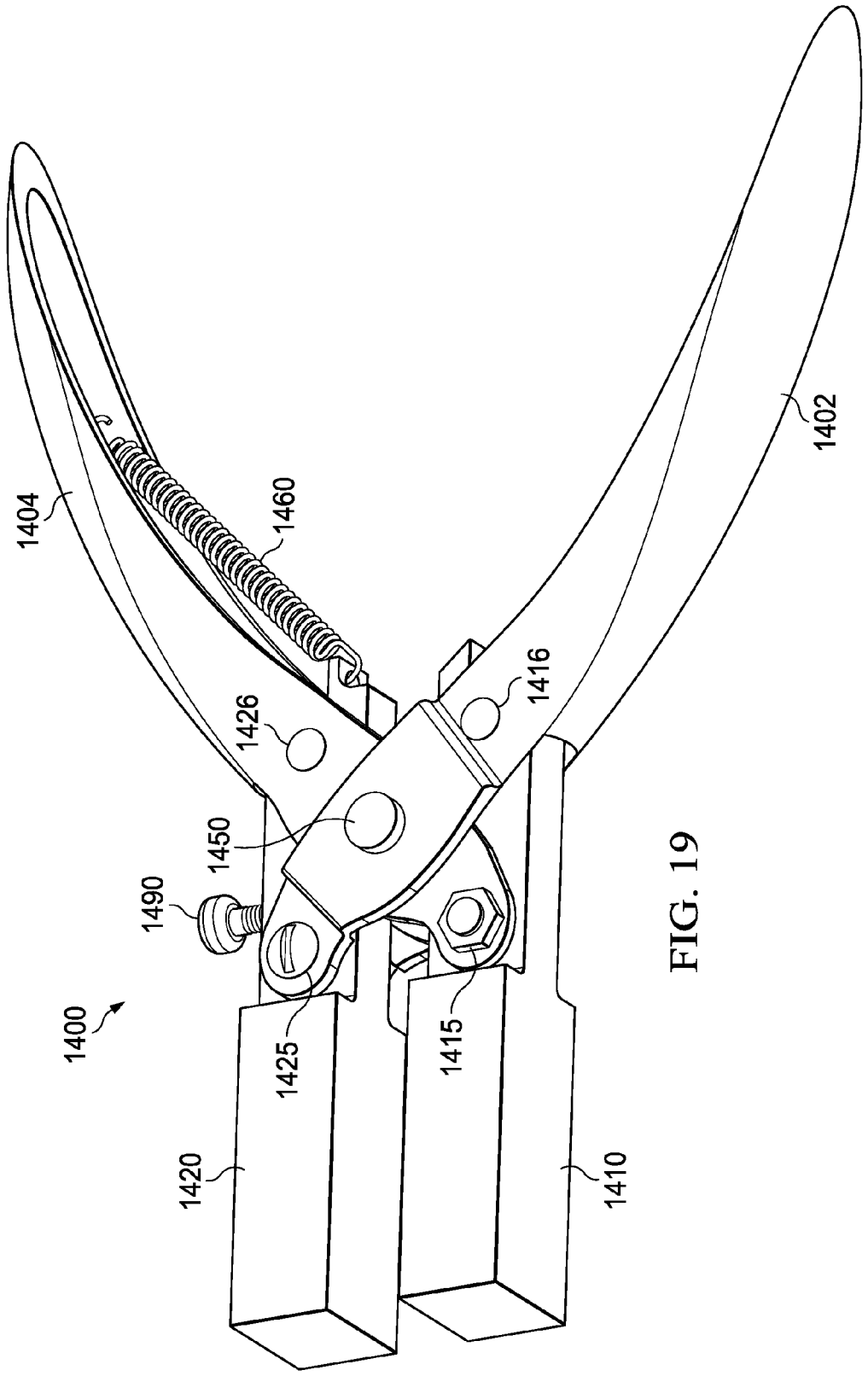

FIG. 19

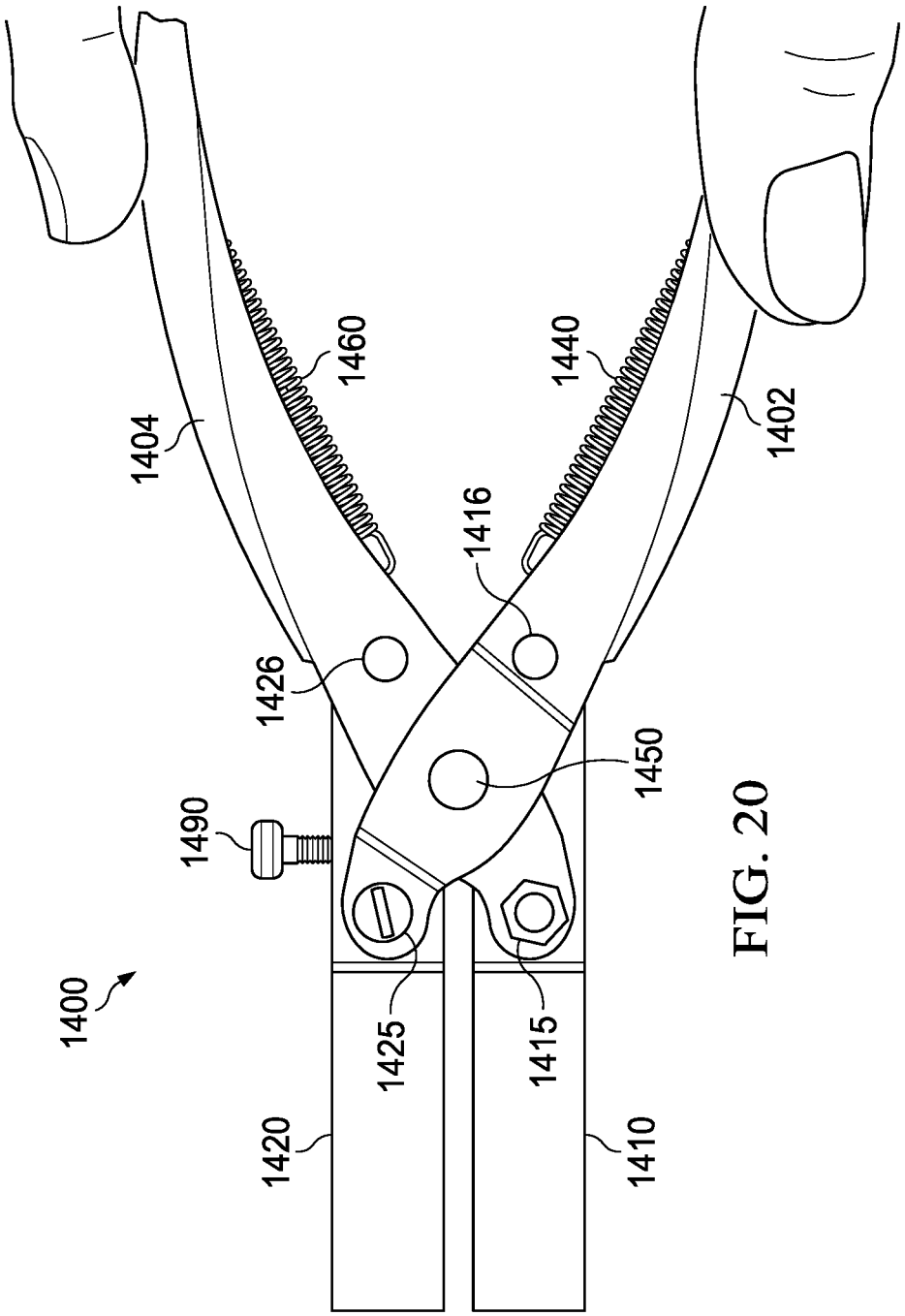
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FIG. 20

JEWELRY MANDREL PLIERS AND METHOD OF USING SAME

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Nonprovisional application Ser. No. 14/985,781, filed Dec. 31, 2015, which is itself a continuation of U.S. Nonprovisional application Ser. No. 13/491,755, filed Jun. 8, 2012, and claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/494,705, filed Jun. 8, 2011, which are all incorporated by reference in their entirety as examples.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Technical Field

The present invention relates to a tool for manufacturing jewelry and a method of using such tool. More particularly, this invention relates to a jewelry mandrel constructed in the form of pliers and method, which can be used by jewelers to fabricate jewelry into various shapes.

Description of Related Art

Jewelers have long relied on tapered steel mandrels to fabricate wire or metal shapes for use in their jewelry designs. Tapered mandrels are available in cross sections of various shapes including round, square, triangle, oval, and hexagon. The mandrels are made of steel and provide a surface against which the jeweler can hammer to facilitate the shaping of the material being worked. The taper on the mandrel allows shapes of different sizes to be fabricated using a single mandrel. Although tapered steel mandrels are useful for certain tasks, they present the jeweler with challenges.

The taper on the mandrel makes it difficult to make shapes of the exact size when multiple items are being produced. The reason for this is that the circumference of the particular shape at issue has a tendency to stretch as it is worked on a tapered mandrel, particularly when working with wire. When making multiple items of the same size, each item must be formed one at time when it is made using a tapered mandrel. Because of the difficulty in placing the material in the exact same place on the tapered mandrel while hammering it into shape, the resulting shapes are often of a slightly different size.

To form a band from a strip of metal using a tapered mandrel, the band must frequently be removed and flipped so that the band does not become larger on one side than the other. The wider a particular band, the more difficult it becomes to keep both edges of the band the same size.

Moreover although a tapered mandrel can be used to produce a shape with sharp corners such a triangle or a square, it is not an easy task. The jeweler must first start with a closed ring or loop and then hammer it down around the mandrel until it produces a sharply defined shape. However, hammering a piece of soft wire or metal on a tapered mandrel often results in the shape being stretched beyond the circumference desired.

Finally, a tapered mandrel is awkward and is difficult to hold by hand. It can be placed in a large vise to hold it, but this method is time consuming and inconvenient. The vise also makes it difficult to obtain a good view of the entire piece in that the mandrel would need to be removed from the vise and rotated to obtain a good view of the back side of the mandrel.

It is therefore an object of the invention to provide a jewelry mandrel tool and method of using same that enables

a user to easily, consistently, and repeatedly replicate the same shape and size. It is also an object of the invention to provide a tool for making numerous rings or other shapes in a more efficient manner and to provide a tool that makes it easier for the jeweler to view the work as it is being formed. It is an object of the invention to provide a tool that allows the wire or metal being formed to be gripped so that shapes can be made without the need for starting with a closed metal ring or tube.

SUMMARY OF AN EMBODIMENT OF INVENTION

The present invention provides a mandrel tool and method for more efficiently and consistently forming various shapes of material. In one embodiment of the invention, a pair of pliers having mandrel jaws that are shaped with a uniform cross sectional area throughout a length of the mandrel jaw is used to replace the traditional tapered mandrel. The mandrel pliers of the present invention may be used to grip wire or sheet metal and form it into unique shapes such as squares, triangles, ovals, or circles. Because the mandrel jaws have a uniform cross sectional area, the wire, for example, can be wrapped multiple times around the mandrel jaw when it is desired to produce multiples of the same shape. For added versatility, the pliers can have opposing mandrel jaws, each having a different size cross sectional area than the other so that a shape of a larger size can be created on one side of the pair pliers and a shape of a smaller size can be reproduced on the other side of the pair of pliers.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of a pair of mandrel pliers in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. **2** is an end view of a pair of mandrel pliers in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

FIGS. **3-7** illustrate a method of using a pair of mandrel pliers to make a square jump ring in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

FIGS. **8-10** illustrate a method of using a pair of mandrel pliers to make a square tube in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. **11** is a perspective view of some examples of shapes that can be made using an embodiment of the mandrel pliers and method of the present invention.

FIGS. **12-13** illustrate perspective views of mandrel pliers with oversized mandrel jaws.

FIG. **14** is a side view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers in accordance with an illustrative embodiment.

FIG. **15** is a top view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers in accordance with an illustrative embodiment.

FIG. **16** is a perspective view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers in accordance with an illustrative embodiment.

FIG. **17** is a perspective view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers taken from a distal end in accordance with an illustrative embodiment.

FIG. **18** is a side view of the pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers shown in FIG. **14** in a closed configuration and without the detent screw engaged.

FIG. **19** is a perspective view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers with the detent screw engaged.

FIG. **20** is a side view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers shown in FIG. **14** in a closed configuration with the adjustment screw engaged.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring now to FIG. **1**, a perspective view of a pair of mandrel pliers in accordance with an embodiment of present is invention is illustrated. The pliers **100** have mandrel jaws **110**, **120**, each having a uniform square cross sectional area along a length from the tip of the mandrel jaw to the raised areas **130**, **140** that are near the pivot **150** of the pliers **100**. To allow more versatility for the pliers **100** and to require fewer pliers to be purchased by the jeweler to manufacture shapes of various sizes, the mandrel jaws **110**, **120** can be constructed of different dimensions. As illustrated, the cross sectional area of the mandrel jaw **110** is larger than the cross sectional area of the opposing mandrel jaw **120**.

Referring now to FIG. **2**, an end view of a pair of mandrel pliers in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention is illustrated. The upper mandrel jaw **110** has a larger cross sectional area than the lower mandrel jaw **120**.

Although mandrel jaws **110**, **120** are illustrated in the form of square mandrels, various shapes can be utilized for the mandrel jaw **110**, **120** without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. For example, the mandrel jaws could be triangular, round, oval, rectangular, or any other shape that is desired by a jeweler for shaping jewelry. Additionally, the opposing jaws could each be a different shape. For example, one jaw could have a triangular cross section and the other jaw could have a square cross section.

Referring now to FIGS. **3-7**, a method of using the mandrel pliers **100** to make a square jump ring in accordance with an embodiment of the invention is illustrated. To make square jump rings (or links) with the pliers **100**, the wire **310** is placed between the mandrel jaws **110**, **120** and gripped firmly as the user wraps the wire **310** around the outside of the mandrel jaw **110** while pulling tightly on the wire **310**. Once the wire is wrapped around to the opposing side of the mandrel pliers **100** the mandrel jaws **110**, **120** are then opened by the user to allow the user to continue wrapping the wire around the mandrel jaw **110**. Once the wire is placed through the space **410** between the mandrel jaws **110**, **120**, the user re-grips the wire and repeats the process pulling the wire tightly around the mandrel jaw **110** again as shown in FIG. **4**. This process is continued until the desired number of wraps is reached. The bends of the coil **510** at the corners of the mandrel jaw **110** can be sharpened by hammering the three exposed sides of the coil directly onto the mandrel jaw **110** with a hammer **520** as shown in FIG. **5**. After forming, the coil **510** is slid off of the mandrel jaw **110**. The coil **510** can be used as is to make jewelry or the coil can be cut as shown in FIG. **6** to produce a square jump ring **710** as shown in FIG. **7**.

Referring now to FIGS. **8-10**, a method of using the mandrel pliers **100** to make a square tube in accordance with an embodiment of the invention is illustrated. To make a square tube with the pliers **100**, a strip of sheet metal **810** is placed between the mandrel jaws **110**, **120** and gripped firmly as the user wraps the strip of sheet metal **810** around the outside of the mandrel jaw **110** while pulling tightly on the sheet metal **810**. Depending on the thickness and flexibility of the sheet metal **810**, it may be desirable to square each corner off more precisely by hammering directly on the mandrel jaw of the pliers after each bend as shown in FIG. **9**. Once the formation of the sheet metal is completed, the square tube **1010** can be slid off the mandrel jaw **110** as shown in FIG. **10**. The excess sheet metal **810** can then be trimmed adjacent to the square tube **1010**. To complete the square tube, the joint may be soldered as is known in the art.

Referring now to FIG. **11**, some examples of shapes that can be made using the method of the present invention are illustrated. These shapes have many applications for a jewelry designer. The tubes can be soldered together to make big-hole beads or the jeweler can make bezels for setting stones or holding resin. A disk can also be soldered to each end of the tube to create matching hollow beads. The square coils can be linked together, fused, or soldered to make a fancy tube **1110**. As previously discussed, the square coils can also be cut to make jump rings or links that can be flattened and textured with hammers.

Referring now to FIGS. **12** and **13**, perspective views of mandrel pliers with oversized mandrel jaws is illustrated. The pliers of FIG. **12** have oversized cylindrical jaws **1210**, **1220**. The jaws each have a different cross-sectional area to allow circular shapes of different sizes to be formed. Similarly, the pliers of FIG. **13** have oversized cylindrical jaws **1210**, **1220**. The jaws each have a different cross-sectional area to allow circular shapes of different sizes to be formed. Pliers with oversized jaws can be constructed by first forming the desired mandrel jaws **1320**, **1310** and then welding the mandrel jaws to the ends **1340**, **1350** of the plier handle assembly. The pliers of FIG. **1** can be formed by machining the mandrel jaws **110**, **120** and one half of the plier assembly from a single piece of stock. Because of the large size of the mandrel jaws of the pliers illustrated in FIGS. **12** and **13**, welding of the mandrel jaws to the plier assembly may be a more efficient method of manufacturing the pliers than machining would be.

FIG. **14** is a side view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. The parallel-action mandrel pliers **1400** have a compound pivoting mechanism that permits the two mandrel jaws to maintain a parallel or at least a substantially parallel orientation as they move from an open configuration to a closed configuration. As a result, each of a plurality of wire loops formed by wrapping a wire around one of the mandrel jaws will be subjected to the same grasping force. In contrast, when a plurality of wire loops are grasped by a pair of pliers with mandrel jaws that travel in an arced path relative to each other, the wire loop closest to the connection point is grasped with the most amount of force and wire loops furthest from the connection point are grasped with the least amount of force, or not at all. The differential grasping forces may result in marring of the wire, or wire loops that lack consistent sizes.

Returning to FIG. **14**, the pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers **1400** may be generally described as a pair of substantially parallel mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420**, each of which are connected to each of a pair of handles **1402** and **1404**. Further, the pair of handles **1402** and **1404** are connected to each other at a pivot **1450** so that application of a squeezing force on the pair of handles **1402** and **1404** causes the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** to achieve a closed configuration, but while keeping the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** in a parallel configuration. The pivot **1450** may be a connector that connects the handles **1402** and **1404** from the front side to the back side of the handles **1402** and **1404**, or the pivot **1450** may be two connectors: one connector coupling one side of handles **1402** and **1404**, another connector coupling the other side of handles **1402** and **1404**, and a space separating one side of handles **1402** and **1404** from the other side of handles **1402** and **1404**.

As mentioned previously, although mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** are illustrated in the form of square mandrels, various shapes can be utilized for the mandrel jaw **1410** and **1420** without departing from the spirit and scope of the

invention. For example, the mandrel jaws could be triangular, round, oval, rectangular, or any other shape that is desired by a jeweler for shaping jewelry. Additionally, the opposing jaws could each be a different shape. For example, one jaw could have a triangular cross section and the other jaw could have a square cross section. Additionally, the mandrel pliers **1400** are not limited to mandrel jaws of the same size or shape, or any combination thereof. For example, one pair of parallel action mandrel pliers may have rectangular mandrel jaws, with each jaw being the exact same size and shape, and another pair may have one mandrel that is rectangular and the other mandrel that is triangular and a smaller size than that of the rectangular mandrel. The present invention is not limited to any combination of size or shape of the mandrel jaws.

In the non-limiting embodiment in FIG. **14**, each of the pair of handles **1402** and **1404** are shaped to define a trough that is bifurcated into a slot for the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** as discussed with regards to and as more clearly illustrated in FIG. **16**. Housed at least partially within each trough is a spring that provides an opening force that causes the pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers **1400** to attain the open configuration upon release of the squeezing force on the pair of handles **1402** and **1404**. In particular, spring **1460** is housed at least partially within the trough defined by handle **1404**. A proximate end of the spring **1460** is attached to an anchor point (not shown) and the distal end of the spring **1460** is attached to the proximate end of the mandrel jaw **1420**. Likewise, spring **1440** is housed at least partially within the trough defined by handle **1402** with a proximate end of the spring attached to another anchor (not shown) and a distal end of the spring **1440** attached to a proximate end of the mandrel jaw **1410**. The proximate end of each mandrel jaw **1410** and **1420** rests on the rivets **1416** and **1426** that pass through one side of each handle **1402** and **1404** to the other side, to provide a surface on which the mandrel jaws **1410**, **1420** can slide when the jaws are moved between the open and closed configuration. The rivets **1416**, **1426** may also comprise rails housed between opposing sidewalls of the handles so as to provide the sliding surface for the mandrel jaws **1410**, **1420**.

Passing through one of the two mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** is an adjustment screw **1490**. In the present non-limiting embodiment, the adjustment screw **1490** passes through mandrel jaw **1420**. The adjustment screw **1490** can keep the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** from closing past any particular width. The adjustment screw **1490** prevents the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** from closing any farther than the set width, and the screw **1490** can also prevent the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** from crushing the wires or the shape created by the wires or other material. Other types of détente mechanisms may be used to prevent the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** from closing any farther than a set width.

This non-limiting exemplary embodiment may be used in the same manner as disclosed with respect to FIGS. **3-7**. This exemplary embodiment may be used by placing wire or any other material between the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** and wrapping the wire around the outside of either mandrel jaw while gripped firmly and pulling tightly on the wire. Then, once the wire is wrapped around the mandrel jaw, the mandrel jaw opens to allow for another iteration of wrapping the wire around the mandrel jaw. Also, as mentioned previously, the various mandrel jaw shapes may be used with the exemplary method so as to create different types of wire shapes.

An advantage of this non-limiting exemplary embodiment is that the parallel action provided by the mandrel pliers **1400** has a leveraging quality such that metal gripped by the pliers **1400** can be gripped much more tightly and securely while using less hand strength as compared to other types of pliers. Also, the metal can be gripped more tightly without marking or marring the metal by the pliers **1400**.

FIG. **15** is a top view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. FIG. **15** illustrates how the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** are coupled in relation to the handles **1402** and **1404**. As shown previously with FIG. **14**, pivot **1450** couples the handles **1402** and **1404** so as to give the pliers **1400** its pivoting motion, and the adjustment screw **1490** provides fine adjustment of the opening between the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420**. The handles **1402** and **1404** are shaped to extend past the pivot **1450** and connect to the mandrel jaws at screws **1415** and **1425**. The screws **1415** and **1425** pass through the handles **1402** and **1404** as well as the corresponding mandrel jaw before a washer and nut is attached to the other side. The screws **1415** and **1425** may be polished, burnished, or otherwise smoothed out so as to not protrude out too much in relation to the width of the mandrel pliers **1400**. Returning to FIG. **14**, the handles **1402** and **1404** overlap each other to create a stable connection and an equal distribution of force when applied along the pivot **1450**. On one side of the mandrel pliers **1400**, handle **1404** overlaps handle **1402** at the pivot, and on the other side of the mandrel pliers **1400**, handle **1402** overlaps handle **1404** at the pivot **1450**. FIG. **15** also illustrates the width and shape of the mandrel jaw **1420** in comparison to the rest of the mandrel pliers **1400**. Mandrel jaw **1410** is substantially the same as mandrel jaw **1420**, as a top view of the mandrel pliers **1400** is substantially the same as a bottom view of the mandrel pliers **1400**. In the present illustrative embodiment, the mandrel jaw **1420** comprises a rectangular prism shape, before the jaw **1420** tapers in shape and width for connecting the mandrel jaw **1420** to handle **1402** using the connecting screw **1425**. The mandrel jaw **1420** maintains the smaller width from the point of connection with handle **1402** until the mandrel jaw **1420** tapers into a smaller width and shape, which is not shown in FIG. **15** and is illustrated more clearly with FIGS. **16**, **17** and **19**.

FIG. **16** is a perspective view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. The mandrel pliers **1400**, as shown in FIG. **16**, are in an open configuration with the handles **1402** and **1404** spread out. FIG. **16** illustrates how the handles **1402** and **1404** are coupled with the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420**. The mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** extend into slots created by the bifurcations of each handle **1402** and **1404**, and may extend out of the trough of the handles **1402** and **1404**. Preferably, the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** extend a few millimeters past the handles **1402** and **1404**.

FIG. **17** is a perspective view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers taken from a distal end in accordance with an illustrative embodiment. FIG. **17** more clearly illustrates the trough of each handle **1402** and **1404**, and the contents of the troughs. In the illustrative embodiment of FIG. **17**, the troughs of the handles **1402** and **1404** at least partially houses springs **1440** and **1460**. The proximate end of spring **1440** attaches to anchor **1705** on handle **1402**, and similarly, the proximate end of spring **1460** attaches to a second anchor (not shown) on handle **1402**. The positioning of the second anchor mirrors the positioning of the anchor **1705**. The

anchor **1705** may be a cut-out tab pushed into the trough of the handle **1402**, so that the end of the spring **1440** hooks onto the anchor **1705**.

FIG. **17** illustrates two alternative shapes of the proximate end of the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420**, and how the springs **1440** and **1460** attach to the two different end shapes of the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420**. The proximate end of mandrel jaw **1410** attached to spring **1440** comprises two protrusions created by a bifurcation of the proximate end of the mandrel jaw **1410** to form a slot **1720**. The rivet **1416** is the structure that slides within the slot **1720** as the jaws **1410**, **1420** are moving between the open and closed configurations. The spring **1440** can attach to a hole **1725** created on either of the two protrusions located at the proximate end of the mandrel jaw **1410**.

For the other end shape, the proximate end of mandrel jaw **1420** attached to spring **1460** comprises an arcuate shape, and the spring **1460** is attached to an aperture **1730** located at the proximate end of mandrel jaw **1420**. With this alternative end shape, the mandrel jaw **1420** has a reduced width on its proximal end so as to permit sliding on the surface of the rivet **1426** as the mandrel jaws move between the open and closed configurations. The reduced width of the mandrel jaw **1420** on its proximal end allows for the rivet to slide along the outside-facing surface of the mandrel jaw **1420**, and the spring **1460** helps keep the mandrel jaw **1420** in contact with the rivet **1426** by applying pressure that pulls the mandrel jaw **1420** toward the handles **1402**, **1404** and outward, thereby forcing the mandrel jaw **1420** to keep in contact with the rivet **1426**. Alternatively, the proximate end of the mandrel jaw **1420** may comprise a flat angled shape, as illustrated with the first end shape of the mandrel jaw **1410**, instead of an arcuate shape, as illustrated with the second end shape of the mandrel jaw **1420**.

Also illustrated in FIG. **17** is a metal wire loop **1710** for securing the handles **1402** and **1404** together when the mandrel pliers **1400** are in a closed configuration. The metal wire loop **1710** is attached to a single handle **1404**, and in other embodiments, the metal wire loop **1710** may be on the other handle **1402**. When the mandrel pliers **1400** are in a closed configuration, the metal wire loop **1710** on handle **1404** may be pivoted and positioned so that the distal end of the metal wire loop **1710** loops around the distal end of handle **1402** before settling against the outer surface of the handle **1402**. Therefore, when the force compressing the mandrel pliers **1400** into the closed configuration is released, the handle **1402** will pushed back against the metal wire loop **1710** and stay in either a closed configuration or a partially open configuration.

FIG. **18** is a side view of the pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers shown in FIG. **14** in a closed configuration and without the adjustment screw engaged. As mentioned previously, the adjustment screw **1490** may be used to prevent the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** from closing any farther than a width prescribed by the adjustment screw **1490**. As shown in FIG. **18**, the adjustment screw is not engaged, and the adjustment screw **1490** is adjusted prior to applying force onto the handles **1402** and **1404** of the mandrel pliers **1400** into the closed configuration. In this closed configuration with the adjustment screw **1490** not engaged, the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** are able to completely close, such that the inner surfaces of the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** are in complete contact with each other.

FIG. **19** is a perspective view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers with the adjustment screw engaged. The adjustment screw **1440** is engaged by tightening the screw **1490** and causing it to advance through the aperture so that it extends through the mandrel jaw **1420** toward the mandrel jaw **1410**. The amount of tightening of the adjustment screw **1490** determines how large the gap is between the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** when the mandrel pliers **1400** are in the closed position.

FIG. **20** is a side view of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers shown in FIG. **14** in a closed configuration with the adjustment screw engaged. As can be seen, the adjustment screw **1490** is engaged but it is not fully tightened into the adjustment screw aperture, and therefore, when the mandrel pliers **1400** are in the closed configuration, there is a gap between the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420**. The maximum gap between the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** depends on the adjustment screw **1490** used, and on the dimensions of the mandrel pliers **1400**. The maximum gap between the mandrel jaws **1410** and **1420** is preferably smaller than the gap between the mandrel jaws when the mandrel pliers **1400** is in the open configuration.

The parallel-action mandrel pliers **1400** may also be used to crisp up any bends in the wire. For example, when a user makes square jump rings, the user wraps the wire around one of the mandrel jaws **1410**, **1420** by hand, and each side of the square jump ring might have a slightly curved or rounded shape, especially when using a heavier gauge wire that is more difficult to manipulate by hand and when not employing the use of a hammer to tap the wire into shape on the mandrel jaw. After cutting the coil of jump rings apart, the user can flatten each side of the square jump ring by placing the ring back on one jaw of the pliers **1400** and applying the other mandrel jaw so as to apply pressure to flatten a particular side of the jump ring. The user can then remove the jump ring from the pliers **1400**, rotate the square ring 180 degrees, put the square ring back on the mandrel jaw, and apply pressure via the other mandrel jaw. The user may also do the same with the other sides of the square jump ring to get a squared jump ring with flat sides. This technique is quicker than other conventional methods of crisping wire bends, such as hammering on the mandrel, and this technique may be used with the any size or shape, and combination thereof, of mandrel jaws.

In a non-limiting embodiment, the mandrel pliers **1400** may have mandrel jaws of different sizes. In this embodiment, the above disclosed technique of sharpening corners of jump rings may be more difficult when used with the larger mandrel jaw of the differently sized mandrel jaws because the smaller jaw does not extend the full width of the larger jaw and therefor limits the user's ability to sharpen or crisp the corners of a jump ring on the larger mandrel jaw with one compression of the mandrel jaws. Accordingly, the user may place the jump rings formed on the larger mandrel jaw onto the smaller mandrel jaw, and then align the corner of the jump ring snugly against the edge of the smaller jaw. By doing this, the user can then flatten the area of the side of the jump ring that is between the mandrel jaws, and this area may include the side of the jump ring up to the corner of the jump ring. Then, the user can slide the jump ring along the mandrel jaw so that the adjacent corner is pressed against the opposite side of the smaller mandrel, and then the user can then apply pressure so as to flatten the area around the adjacent corner of the jump ring. This technique may be then repeated for any of the other sides of the jump ring.

While the above technique may be used with parallel-action mandrel pliers with jaws of different sizes, crisping wire bends may be more efficient with parallel-action mandrel pliers with same size jaws. Alternatively, mandrel jaws with different shapes having the side that meets the other mandrel jaw the same width as each other may allow for a

variety of different shapes and sizes to be formed while maintaining the ability to crisp the wire corners or any other wire bends. Additionally, the above techniques may be used with both open jump rings and closed (soldered) jump rings.

FIGS. **14-20** illustrates an exemplary embodiment of a pair of parallel-action mandrel pliers. The exemplary embodiment may be used with any of the previous exemplary embodiments shown in FIGS. **1-13**.

The tool and method of the present invention thus provides an efficient and consistent method for a jeweler to make shapes using mandrels. When making shapes with sharp corners it is no longer necessary to join a loop together and form it by hammering it on a tapered mandrel. Because the loop can be left opened, the shapes can be more easily joined directly to each other before soldering them closed. A step is saved and finishing is easier because the jeweler does not have to cut the shape open and then re-solder. In addition, there are applications for open shapes to be used where it is not necessary to solder it closed, in which case, the step of cutting the formed link is saved.

The jeweler can make square, oval, circular, triangular, rectangular and other shapes in multiples rather than one at a time as is required when using a tapered mandrel. The jeweler can also maintain a consistent circumference of the shaped piece without having to flip the piece over repetitively as is required when working wired pieces of material on a tapered mandrel. A vise is no longer necessary because the jeweler can easily grip the material by hand using the mandrel pliers. The mandrel pliers allow the jeweler a good view of both the front and the back of the piece by changing the position of the handle on the pliers as the material is being worked. This makes it possible to wrap perfect coil in various shapes as desired by a jeweler.

Although the invention is described above and in the drawings using mandrel jaws of the same shapes, square, circular, etc., the invention is not limited to jaws of the same shape. For example, one jaw could be a square shape and the other rectangular. One could be triangular and the other circular. The mandrel jaws can also be chosen such that special shapes like hearts or teardrops can be formed. One jaw could be of a "v" or triangular shape that mates with an opposing heart shaped jaw to allow the formation of a crisp "v" or cleft in the top of the heart. Alternatively, one jaw could be of a "v" shape that mates with the bottom of the teardrop on a teardrop shaped opposing jaw. Numerous other shapes could also be formed with the mandrel pliers of the present invention by using various shapes on the jaws of the pliers.

Although the invention hereof has been described by way of a preferred embodiment, it will be evident that other adaptations and modifications can be employed without departing from the spirit and scope thereof. The terms and expressions employed herein have been used as terms of description and not of limitation; and thus, there is no intent of excluding equivalents, but on the contrary it is intended to cover any and all equivalents that may be employed without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. For example, the shapes of the mandrel jaws could be any shape desired by the jeweler, including non-traditional shapes.

What is claimed is:

1. A pair of mandrel pliers for forming a material during the manufacture of jewelry, the pair of mandrel pliers comprising:

a first member forming a first handle, wherein the first member has a first proximate end and a first distal end;

a second member forming a second handle, wherein the second member has a second proximate end and a second distal end, and wherein the first member and the second member are pivotably joined at a central connection point;

a first mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the first member at the first distal end, and wherein the first mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a second rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the second member at a position between the second proximate end and the second distal end;

a second mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the second member at the second distal end, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a first rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the first member at a position between the first proximate end and the first distal end; and

wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are capable of securely gripping the material at a location between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw upon an application of a squeezing force to the first handle and the second handle, and wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are parallel to each other upon the application of the squeezing force

the pair of mandrel pliers further comprising an adjustment screw that controls a width of a gap between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw when the mandrel pliers are in a closed configuration.

2. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim **1**, wherein the first member further comprises a first bifurcation at the first distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the first member is shaped to define a first trough, and wherein the second member further comprises a second bifurcation at the second distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the second member is shaped to define a second trough.

3. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim **2**, wherein the first mandrel jaw is suspended between the first bifurcation and the second bifurcation, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is suspended between the second bifurcation and the first bifurcation.

4. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim **2**, further comprising:

a first spring housed at least partially within the first trough of the first member, wherein a first end of the first spring is anchored to a first position closer to the first proximate end of the first member than the first distal end of the first member, and wherein a second end of the first spring is anchored to a proximate end of the second mandrel jaw; and

a second spring housed at least partially within the second trough of the second member, wherein a first end of the second spring is anchored to a second position closer to the second proximate end of the second member than the second distal end of the second member, and wherein a second end of the second spring is anchored to a proximate end of the first mandrel jaw.

5. The mandrel pliers of claim **1**, wherein a first cross-sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is rectangular, or a second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is rectangular, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are rectangular.

6. The mandrel pliers of claim **1**, wherein a first cross-sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is triangular, or a second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is triangular, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are triangular.

7. The mandrel pliers of claim 1, wherein a first cross-sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is oval, or said second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is oval, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are.

8. The mandrel pliers of claim 1, wherein a first cross sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is circular, or a second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is circular, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are circular.

9. The mandrel pliers of claim 1, wherein wrapping said material around said first mandrel jaw at said location forms a first loop enclosing a first area, and wherein wrapping said material around said second mandrel jaw at said location forms a second loop enclosing a second area different than said first area.

10. A method for forming a material using a pair of mandrel pliers,

wherein the pair of mandrel pliers comprise

a first member forming a first handle, wherein the first member has a first proximate end and a first distal end;

a second member forming a second handle, wherein the second member has a second proximate end and a second distal end, and wherein the first member and the second member are pivotably joined at a central connection point;

a first mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the first member at the first distal end, and wherein the first mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a second rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the second member at a position between the second proximate end and the second distal end;

a second mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the second member at the second distal end, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a first rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the first member at a position between the first proximate end and the first distal end; and

wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are capable of securely gripping the material at a location between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw upon an application of a squeezing force to the first handle and the second handle, and wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are parallel to each other upon the application of the squeezing force,

said method comprising:

placing said material at a location between said first mandrel jaw and said second mandrel jaw, wherein the location is also within a first operable length of the first mandrel jaw and a second operable length of the second mandrel jaw;

applying a squeezing force to said first handle and said second handle to securely grip the material at the location between said first mandrel jaw and said second mandrel jaw;

pulling on said material while wrapping said material at least partially around said first mandrel jaw to form a first loop at least partially enclosing a first area, or pulling on said material while wrapping said material at least partially around said second mandrel jaw to form a second loop at least partially enclosing a second area different than said first area.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising:

releasing said squeezing force to separate said first mandrel jaw and said second mandrel jaw;

continuing to wrap the material around either said first mandrel jaw or said second mandrel jaw to complete said first loop or said second loop.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

repeating the steps of the method to form a plurality of loops.

13. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

hammering said first loop or said second loop to sharpen corners of said first loop or said second loop.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein said first area comprises one of a rectangular shape, a triangular shape, an oval shape, and a circular shape.

15. The method of claim 10, wherein the second area comprises one of a rectangular shape, a triangular shape, an oval shape, and a circular shape.

16. The method of claim 10, wherein the first member further comprises a first bifurcation at the distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the first member is shaped to define a first trough, and wherein the second member further comprises a second bifurcation at the distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the second member is shaped to define a second trough.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the first mandrel jaw is suspended between the first bifurcation and the second bifurcation, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is suspended between the second bifurcation and the first bifurcation.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the pair of mandrel pliers further comprises:

a first spring housed at least partially within the first trough of the first member, wherein a first end of the first spring is anchored to a first position closer to the first proximate end of the first member than the first distal end of the first member, and wherein a second end of the first spring is anchored to a proximate end of the second mandrel jaw; and

a second spring housed at least partially within the second trough of the second member, wherein a first end the second spring is anchored to a second position closer to the second proximate end of the second member than the second distal end of the second member, and wherein a second end of the second spring is anchored to a proximate end of the first mandrel jaw.

19. The method of claim 10, further comprising an adjustment screw for controlling a width of a gap between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw when the mandrel pliers are in a closed configuration.

20. A pair of mandrel pliers for forming a material during the manufacture of jewelry, the pair of mandrel pliers comprising:

a first member forming a first handle, wherein the first member has a first proximate end and a first distal end;

a second member forming a second handle, wherein the second member has a second proximate end and a second distal end, and wherein the first member and the second member are pivotably joined at a central connection point;

a first mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the first member at the first distal end, and wherein the first mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a second rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the second member at a position between the second proximate end and the second distal end;

a second mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the second member at the second distal end, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a first rail

housed between opposing sidewalls of the first member at a position between the first proximate end and the first distal end; and

wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are capable of securely gripping the material at a location between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw upon an application of a squeezing force to the first handle and the second handle, and wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are parallel to each other upon the application of the squeezing force;

wherein the first member further comprises a first bifurcation at the first distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the first member is shaped to define a first trough, and wherein the second member further comprises a second bifurcation at the second distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the second member is shaped to define a second trough;

the pair of mandrel pliers further comprising:

a first spring housed at least partially within the first trough of the first member, wherein a first end of the first spring is anchored to a first position closer to the first proximate end of the first member than the first distal end of the first member, and wherein a second end of the first spring is anchored to a proximate end of the second mandrel jaw; and

a second spring housed at least partially within the second trough of the second member, wherein a first end of the second spring is anchored to a second position closer to the second proximate end of the second member than the second distal end of the second member, and wherein a second end of the second spring is anchored to a proximate end of the first mandrel jaw.

21. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim **20**, wherein the first mandrel jaw is suspended between the first bifurcation and the second bifurcation, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is suspended between the second bifurcation and the first bifurcation.

22. The mandrel pliers of claim **20**, wherein a first cross-sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is rectangular, or a second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is rectangular, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are rectangular.

23. The mandrel pliers of claim **20**, wherein a first cross-sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is triangular, or a second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is triangular, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are triangular.

24. The mandrel pliers of claim **20**, wherein a first cross-sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is oval, or said second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is oval, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are oval.

25. The mandrel pliers of claim **20**, wherein a first cross sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is circular, or a second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is circular, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are circular.

26. The mandrel pliers of claim **20**, wherein wrapping said material around said first mandrel jaw at said location forms a first loop enclosing a first area, and wherein wrapping said material around said second mandrel jaw at said location forms a second loop enclosing a second area different than said first area.

27. A pair of mandrel pliers for forming a material during the manufacture of jewelry, the pair of mandrel pliers comprising:

a first member forming a first handle, wherein the first member has a first proximate end and a first distal end;

a second member forming a second handle, wherein the second member has a second proximate end and a second distal end, and wherein the first member and the second member are pivotably joined at a central connection point;

a first mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the first member at the first distal end, and wherein the first mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a second rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the second member at a position between the second proximate end and the second distal end;

a second mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the second member at the second distal end, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a first rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the first member at a position between the first proximate end and the first distal end; and

wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are capable of securely gripping the material at a location between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw upon an application of a squeezing force to the first handle and the second handle, and wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are parallel to each other upon the application of the squeezing force;

wherein a first cross-sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is rectangular, or a second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is rectangular, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are rectangular.

28. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim **27** wherein the first member further comprises a first bifurcation at the first distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the first member is shaped to define a first trough, and wherein the second member further comprises a second bifurcation at the second distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the second member is shaped to define a second trough.

29. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim **28** wherein the first mandrel jaw is suspended between the first bifurcation and the second bifurcation, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is suspended between the second bifurcation and the first bifurcation.

30. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim **28** further comprising:

a first spring housed at least partially within the first trough of the first member, wherein a first end of the first spring is anchored to a first position closer to the first proximate end of the first member than the first distal end of the first member, and wherein a second end of the first spring is anchored to a proximate end of the second mandrel jaw; and

a second spring housed at least partially within the second trough of the second member, wherein a first end of the second spring is anchored to a second position closer to the second proximate end of the second member than the second distal end of the second member, and wherein a second end of the second spring is anchored to a proximate end of the first mandrel jaw.

31. The mandrel pliers of claim **27**, wherein wrapping said material around said first mandrel jaw at said location forms a first loop enclosing a first area, and wherein wrapping said material around said second mandrel jaw at said location forms a second loop enclosing a second area different than said first area.

32. The mandrel pliers of claim 27 further comprising an adjustment screw that controls a width of a gap between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw when the mandrel pliers are in a closed configuration.

33. A pair of mandrel pliers for forming a material during the manufacture of jewelry, the pair of mandrel pliers comprising:

a first member forming a first handle, wherein the first member has a first proximate end and a first distal end;

a second member forming a second handle, wherein the second member has a second proximate end and a second distal end, and wherein the first member and the second member are pivotably joined at a central connection point;

a first mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the first member at the first distal end, and wherein the first mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a second rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the second member at a position between the second proximate end and the second distal end;

a second mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the second member at the second distal end, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a first rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the first member at a position between the first proximate end and the first distal end; and

wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are capable of securely gripping the material at a location between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw upon an application of a squeezing force to the first handle and the second handle, and wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are parallel to each other upon the application of the squeezing force;

wherein a first cross-sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is triangular, or a second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is triangular, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are triangular.

34. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim 33 wherein the first member further comprises a first bifurcation at the first distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the first member is shaped to define a first trough, and wherein the second member further comprises a second bifurcation at the second distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the second member is shaped to define a second trough.

35. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim 34 wherein the first mandrel jaw is suspended between the first bifurcation and the second bifurcation, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is suspended between the second bifurcation and the first bifurcation.

36. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim 34 further comprising:

a first spring housed at least partially within the first trough of the first member, wherein a first end of the first spring is anchored to a first position closer to the first proximate end of the first member than the first distal end of the first member, and wherein a second end of the first spring is anchored to a proximate end of the second mandrel jaw; and

a second spring housed at least partially within the second trough of the second member, wherein a first end of the second spring is anchored to a second position closer to the second proximate end of the second member than the second distal end of the second member, and wherein a second end of the second spring is anchored to a proximate end of the first mandrel jaw.

37. The mandrel pliers of claim 33 wherein wrapping said material around said first mandrel jaw at said location forms a first loop enclosing a first area, and wherein wrapping said material around said second mandrel jaw at said location forms a second loop enclosing a second area different than said first area.

38. The mandrel pliers of claim 33 further comprising an adjustment screw that controls a width of a gap between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw when the mandrel pliers are in a closed configuration.

39. A pair of mandrel pliers for forming a material during the manufacture of jewelry, the pair of mandrel pliers comprising:

a first member forming a first handle, wherein the first member has a first proximate end and a first distal end;

a second member forming a second handle, wherein the second member has a second proximate end and a second distal end, and wherein the first member and the second member are pivotably joined at a central connection point;

a first mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the first member at the first distal end, and wherein the first mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a second rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the second member at a position between the second proximate end and the second distal end;

a second mandrel jaw pivotably fastened to the second member at the second distal end, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is slidably engaged to a first rail housed between opposing sidewalls of the first member at a position between the first proximate end and the first distal end; and

wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are capable of securely gripping the material at a location between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw upon an application of a squeezing force to the first handle and the second handle, and wherein the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw are parallel to each other upon the application of the squeezing force;

wherein a first cross-sectional area of the first mandrel jaw is oval, or said second cross-sectional area of the second mandrel jaw is oval, or both the first cross-sectional area and the second cross-sectional area are oval.

40. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim 39 wherein the first member further comprises a first bifurcation at the first distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the first member is shaped to define a first trough, and wherein the second member further comprises a second bifurcation at the second distal end, and wherein an elongate body of the second member is shaped to define a second trough.

41. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim 40 wherein the first mandrel jaw is suspended between the first bifurcation and the second bifurcation, and wherein the second mandrel jaw is suspended between the second bifurcation and the first bifurcation.

42. The pair of mandrel pliers of claim 40 further comprising:

a first spring housed at least partially within the first trough of the first member, wherein a first end of the first spring is anchored to a first position closer to the first proximate end of the first member than the first distal end of the first member, and wherein a second end of the first spring is anchored to a proximate end of the second mandrel jaw; and

a second spring housed at least partially within the second trough of the second member, wherein a first end of the second spring is anchored to a second position closer to the second proximate end of the second member than the second distal end of the second member, and wherein a second end of the second spring is anchored to a proximate end of the first mandrel jaw.

43. The mandrel pliers of claim **39** wherein wrapping said material around said first mandrel jaw at said location forms a first loop enclosing a first area, and wherein wrapping said material around said second mandrel jaw at said location forms a second loop enclosing a second area different than said first area.

44. The mandrel pliers of claim **39** further comprising an adjustment screw that controls a width of a gap between the first mandrel jaw and the second mandrel jaw when the mandrel pliers are in a closed configuration.

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