

functions to prevent leakage of the fluid from the cavity 125 through the layer 110 onto the surface 115. The additional layer 111 is preferably continuous without any perforations, preventing the passage of the fluid through the additional layer 111 to the layer 110 where the fluid may leak through the pocket onto the surface 115. Alternatively, the additional layer 111 may function to allow fluid to pass through proximal to the first portion 210 of the layer 110 that does not include pockets and to prevent fluid to pass through proximal to the second portion 220 of the layer 110 (for example, by forming a webbing between the additional layer 111 and the layer 110 that directs flow of fluid as desired), thus preventing fluid from leaking out the pockets to the surface 115. However, the additional layer 111 may prevent leakage of fluid through the layer 110 to the surface 115 in any other suitable method. The pocket of this variation may also be defined using the layering method of thin-layers described above, but may alternatively be defined in a post-manufacturing process, for example, a stamping process. The layer 110 may be manufactured as a continuous sheet using any suitable method and then cut using a cutting die, creating a pocket through the thickness of the layer 110. The cutting die may create a plurality of pockets at one time, but may alternatively create one pocket at a time. However, any other method and/or process suitable to creating the pocket may be used.

[0037] The pocket of the second variation is preferably of a circular shape (e.g., spherical or cylindrical), but may alternatively be of an arc shape, a rectangular shape (e.g., a rectangular prism), or any other shape suitable to providing the desired geometry of the deformation of the particular region 113.

Second Preferred Embodiment

Third Variation

[0038] In a third variation of the second preferred embodiment, as shown in FIG. 10, the layer 110 is preferably constructed of a material wherein the molecules, fibers, or an other suitable component of the material may be aligned in a particular direction to influence the overall pliability (i.e., elastic modulus) of the material, for example, the pliability of a polymer material. In this variation, the layer 110 preferably includes a first portion 210 wherein the components of the material are aligned in a first direction and a second portion 220 wherein the components of the material are aligned in a second direction. The effective pliability of the layer 110 seen from the force applied by the deformed cavity 125 is preferably higher in the second portion 220 than the first portion 210. For example, in the variation where the layer 110 is a polymer material, polymer molecules that are aligned in a parallel fashion are less structurally resistant to force applied perpendicular to the molecules than a force applied along the direction of alignment. Additionally, polymer molecules that are arranged in a lattice structure (e.g., a “criss-cross” pattern) are also relatively structurally resistant to applied force. Because of these material properties, in this example, the molecules are aligned perpendicular to the force resulting from the deformation of the cavity 125 in the second portion 220 and parallel to the force resulting from the deformation of the cavity 125 and/or arranged in a lattice pattern in the first portion 210 (as shown in FIG. 16a and 16b). The layer 110 may also include a third portion wherein the molecules are aligned at an angle in between a perpendicular angle and a parallel angle to the force resulting from the deformation of

the cavity 125. This third portion preferably functions as a transitional region between the first portion 210 and the second portion 220. The third portion may alternatively function to provide additional control of the shape of the deformation of the particular region 113. For example, in the variation wherein the deformation of the particular region 113 is a square-like deformation, the third portion may function to form a concave portion of the square, providing the user with a tactile indication of where to place their finger, similar that seen on a key of a keyboard. The second portion 220 effectively acts as a material with higher pliability than the first portion 210 and substantially biases the particular region 113 to deform at a higher degree at the second portion 220 than at the first portion 210. The second portion of the third variation preferably functions similarly or identically to the second portion of a second thickness in the first variation. However, any other arrangement of the components of the material of the layer 110 suitable to establishing a first and second portion may be used. Additionally, similar to the first variation, the layer 110 may include a plurality of first and second portions 210 and 220 to create a desired shape for the deformation of the particular region 113.

[0039] Implementation of regions of higher pliability and regions of lower pliability is preferably achieved in one of the above variations, but may alternatively be of any combination or permutation of the above variations or any other suitable variations.

3. Third Preferred Embodiment

Material

[0040] The third preferred embodiment utilizes the material composition of the layer 110 in relation to the attachment points 112 to control the shape of the deformation of the particular region 113. The attachment points 112 of the third preferred embodiment are preferably similar or identical to those of the first preferred embodiment. The material composition of the layer 110 in relation to the attachment points 112 preferably create regions of higher pliability and regions of lower pliability. As the cavity 125 is expanded, the particular region 113 is deformed to accommodate for the adjusted volume and pressure. The regions of relatively higher pliability will deform (e.g. stretch, bend, and/or compress) more while the regions of relatively lower pliability will deform less. The implementation of certain combinations of these regions along the layer 113 allows for the control of the shape of the deformation of the particular region 113. Implementation of such regions of relatively higher pliability and regions of relatively lower pliability is preferably achieved in one of several variations.

[0041] In a first variation of the third preferred embodiment, as shown in FIGS. 17a and 17b, the layer 110 may include a first portion 210 of a first type of material and a second portion 220 of a second type of material. The second type of material preferably has a higher pliability than the first type of material, resulting in higher pliability of the second portion 220 than the first portion 210. The second portion 220 of this first variation of the third preferred embodiment preferably functions similarly or identically to the second portion 220 of the first variation of the second preferred embodiment.

[0042] The first and second portions 210 and 220 are preferably assembled during the manufacturing of the layer 110. For example, the layer 110 may be created using a double injection molding process such that the first and second types