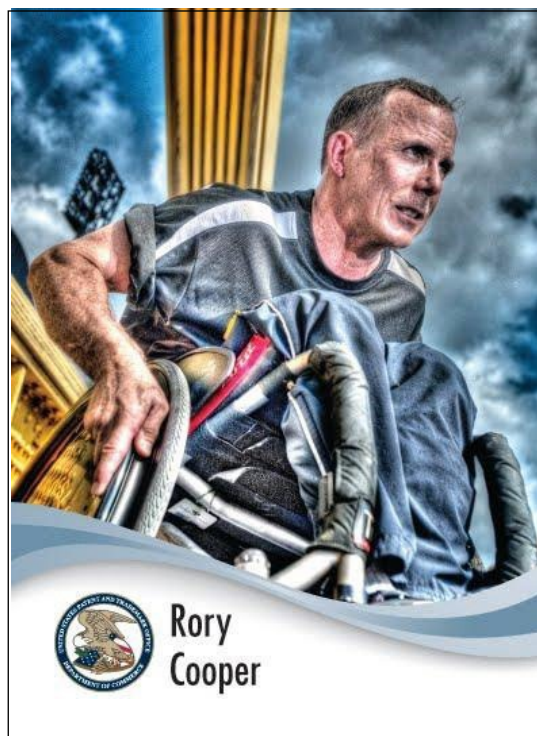


A USPTO inventor trading card activity challenge: Eating better with Rory Cooper

Rory Cooper

Bioengineer, Inventor, Veteran, and Athlete Los Angeles, California

Rory Cooper is a distinguished professor of rehabilitation engineering at the University of Pittsburgh and a senior career scientist for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. His team has developed over 100 inventions and received 25 patents related to technologies, including wheelchairs, robots, and wearable instruments that have significantly improved the lives of people with disabilities and military veterans. In 1988, he was a bronze medalist in the Paralympic Games in Seoul, Republic of Korea, and in 2013, he was awarded the Paralympic Scientific Achievement Award. Dr. Cooper has been the honoree of many awards and the author of many scientific papers and articles. He has contributed to the betterment of people with disabilities globally through his many inventions related to assistive technologies.

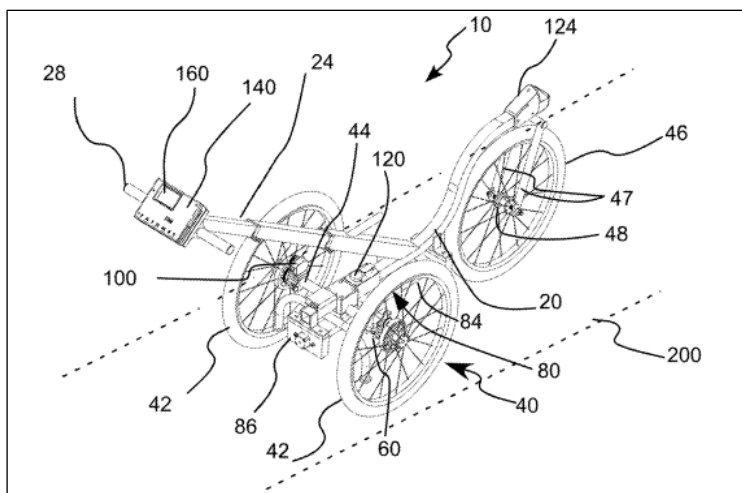


ACTIVITY:

Can you invent eating utensils to help a person with a disability eat?

BACKGROUND:

Many persons with disabilities find it challenging to eat using standard eating utensils (fork, knife, spoon). You will invent an assistive device to enable them to eat more easily. An assistive device is something that helps a person with a disability perform a task or provide equitable access to varying situations.



This patent drawing is from Rory Cooper's Pathway measurement devices, systems and methods. U.S. Patent 10,690,774 B2

MATERIALS:

- Plastic utensils
- Paper
- Tape
- Cardboard
- Paper clip
- Rubber band

DIRECTIONS:

1. Identify a specific problem a person with a disability experiences when eating with standard utensils.



2. Select one plastic utensil:

- a. Fork
- b. Knife
- c. Spoon

3. Draw your design for a new utensil. Label the components and materials that make it work.

4. Using retrofit additive manufacturing, add components you make to the standard utensil. Your assistive device should make it easier for a person with a disability to use. Retrofit additive manufacturing involves adding or subtracting features to the original standard device.

5. Draw your design and share your new modified utensil with an audience (classmates, adults, friends).

You have just invented an assistive device. An assistive device helps a person with a disability perform tasks or perform them more easily. On the next page, you can learn how to protect your idea/invention and make it stand out from others that might be available.

What is Intellectual Property?

Intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions, literary and artistic works, designs, symbols, names, and images used in commerce. There are four types of intellectual property - patents, trademarks, copyrights, or trade secrets.

What ideas for an invention, product, or service do you have?

How could you express your intellectual property so that it is protected?

Rory Cooper is an inventor. You can be one too!

Inventors are problem solvers. If you have ever solved a problem or thought of a new way to accomplish a task, you were an inventor! When you did this activity, you were an inventor! One day you could invent something new that could benefit society.

What will you invent?

What is a patent?

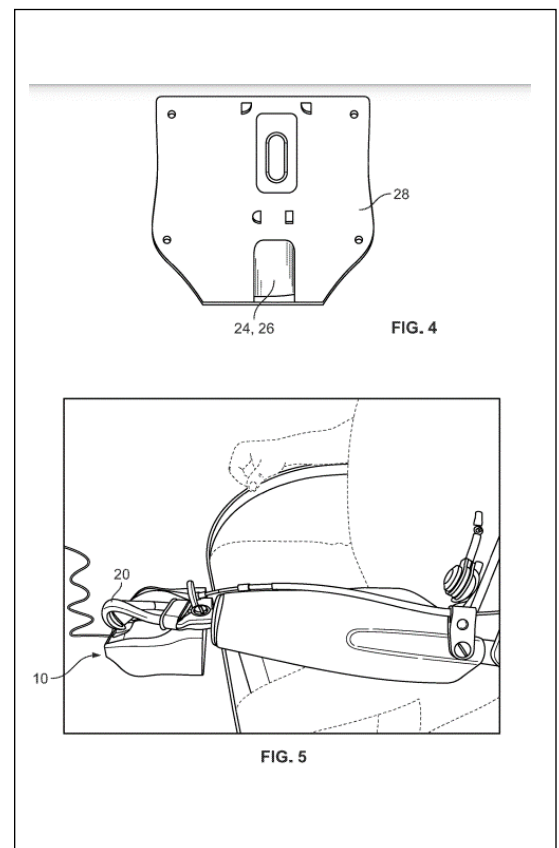
A patent is a property right granted by the government that allows an inventor to stop others from making, using, or selling their invention for a certain amount of time without permission. This right gives the inventor a chance to develop their inventions further to benefit society. Patents also allow the public to learn how an invention works so that others can learn from it and develop ways to improve it.

Do you have an idea for an invention that could be patented?

Design your own trademark

Trademarks help us distinguish between the source of products or services. Trademarks are source identifiers! Trademarks can be words, designs, or a combination of such but trademarks may take other forms such as sounds, scents, shapes, and colors if they distinguish the source of a product or service. Think of a design, name, or symbol you would use to help the world identify and distinguish the brand of your invention. Make sure that it is unique and not easily confused with other trademarks.

How will you create a trademark that will distinguish your invention or product?



Figures 4 and 5 show patent drawings from Rory Cooper's Computer pointing device for use with a prosthetic hook. U.S. Patent 11,144,137 B2