

Dangling Proposition

ALASKAN'S VERSATILE, COMPACT FOOTREST PROVIDES RELIEF FOR LOWER BODY ON LONG TRIPS **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**

LINKEDIN is a powerful social network for meeting like-minded career people. In my case, it's great for meeting inventors with products or stories I find interesting.

I met Candy FitzPatrick, inventor of RestAngles. She hails from Cooper Landing, Alaska—my first Alaskan interview!

Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): Where did you get the idea for RestAngles? How does it work?

Candy FitzPatrick (CF): RestAngles was invented out of necessity while sitting on very long flight routes from my home in Alaska to my job in Antarctica. I felt pressure on the back of my knees and pain in my lower back, hips, and lower extremities due to my legs dangling off the edge of my seat. My legs were dangling because my popliteal height is only 15 inches.

Popliteal height is the distance from the bottom of your feet to the area behind your knees while sitting. The average popliteal height is from 15 to 19.9 inches; the average chair seat height is from 17 to 19 inches, leaving a 2-to-4-inch gap and creating "dangling legs." This is common in many chairs and seats.

Comfortable sitting posture happens when you can rest your feet flat on the floor.

RestAngles brings the floor to your feet. An extremely portable footrest that you can take with you anywhere, it folds flat and weighs only 12 5/8 ounces. RestAngles' patented, one-piece design can be configured for use as a 4-inch platform, 7-inch height when placed on its side, and two different wedge angles.

When used as a 4-inch platform, placing your feet toward the edges leads your knees to naturally fall slightly to the sides, followed by your hips. This position promotes a more comfortable sitting posture.

There is built-in dynamic movement in the center, which moves with your changing needs.

When used on its side, RestAngles elevates your knees above your hips, which can provide further relief for your lower back. In its wedge form, the footrest promotes stretching your muscles in your lower legs.

EGT: Would RestAngles be beneficial in any way for people of average height?

CF: Absolutely! RestAngles may seem primarily designed for shorter people, but it's determinedly the length of a person's popliteal height that applies.

For example, if someone is somewhat tall, they could have a shorter than average popliteal height. Ergonomically, many people can experience more comfort when using a footrest while sitting for extended periods.

EGT: What materials are used?

CF: Gray polypropylene plastic with anti-static "magic," and four non-slip silicon rubber feet.

EGT: Please share your background.

CF: Over 30 years, I careered a patchwork of jobs together—primarily on the ground side of the aviation industry—to amass a fun and varied dual continental career. In 2017, I decided to focus on my portable footrest idea.

Being an inventor often means becoming an entrepreneur. Our mission is to help people who experience pain while sitting due to dangling legs feel more comfortable anywhere they wish to sit!

My first invention was based on my mother's idea for a stand-alone lighted Christmas ornament, which I used to learn about the patent system. The utility patent was issued, but I did not pursue it commercially.

Years later, I was issued a design patent for an early version of RestAngles.

EGT: Have you done any crowdfunding? Any plans for trying out for "Shark Tank"?

“RestAngles may seem primarily designed for shorter people, but it’s determinedly the length of a person’s popliteal height that applies.” —CANDY FITZPATRICK



CF: Yes, we did a modest Kickstarter in April 2022 and are forever grateful to our backers for their generous support, as our campaign fully funded.

In 2018, I pitched at an Alaskan-style “Shark Tank” event. The judges were actual “Shark Tank” casting producers!

I pitched with very early prototypes made of painted wood and duct tape. Cheering for each was great fun. I then submitted a video and completed their detailed application, which was a valuable learning experience for me. But RestAngles was not selected. In 2021, I interviewed with a producer but was again not selected. ...

It’s curious that it is presumed that having equity partners at any stage or phase of business is ideal. The effects the show can have on sales are incredible, but ultimately it should be a mutually beneficial business transaction.

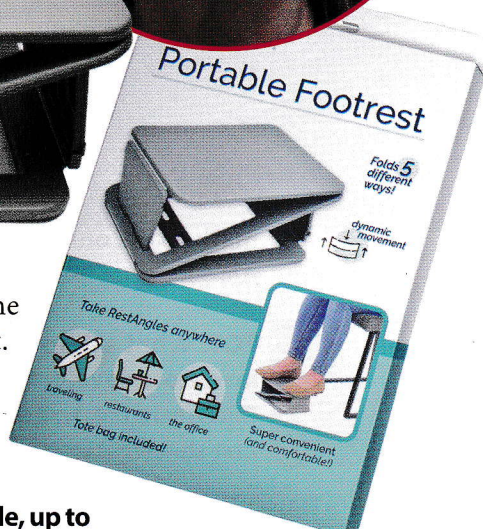
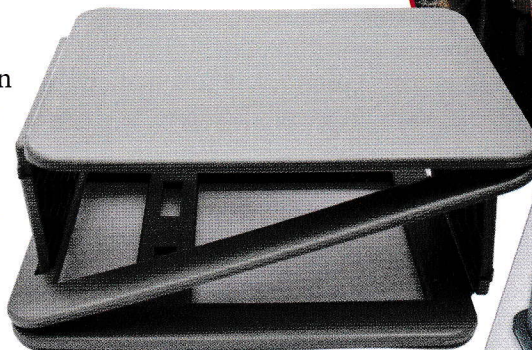
Keeping equity and bootstrapping for as long as you can is a stressful road, but the learning experience in the slog is important and necessary. Someday, I will apply again. What a thrill that would be!

EGT: Is RestAngles patented? Trademarked? Please share your patenting process, and any issues you might have had.

CF: Yes, we hold U.S. utility patent No. 10,966,536 B1, and a U.S. trademark. In addition, we have a registered trademark in Malaysia, where RestAngles is manufactured.

I work with a fabulous local patent agent. The utility patent for “Folding Footrest” was filed in July 2018 and issued in April 2021. The United States Patent and Trademark Office issued a 230-day term of patent extension to compensate for that delay.

The patent issued with an incorrect title, so we went about obtaining a Certificate of Correction,



which is attached at the very end of my patent. It’s a quirky oddity.

EGT: Have you done any safety testing on the product? For example, up to what (body) weight will the product hold?

CF: Yes, we load-tested up to 110 pounds, which includes the weight of any combination of your lower extremities and any footwear. We also tested compliance with California Proposition 65.

EGT: How is the product packaged?

CF: We use sustainable packaging whenever possible and have just finalized our new retail packaging. The retail box is made from eco-friendly kraft paper and can be recycled.

Inside the box is a crossbody tote bag, which is made from rPET (recycled plastic bottles). Our mailer bag is made from recycled plastic materials. It can be reused and then recycled with other soft plastics.

EGT: Are you manufacturing in the United States, or overseas?

CF: All early-stage prototypes, including market-testing units, were made in Alaska. We re-engineered for injection mold manufacturing in Idaho. Our injection mold tool and production runs are made overseas. After making

many RestAngles tote bags myself, I had our new cross-body tote bags and retail packaging made overseas.

EGT: Have there been problems or obstacles you've encountered during manufacturing or importing?

CF: After quite a few setbacks in manufacturing due to COVID-19, our first production run was completed in December 2021, coinciding with the overseas shipping backlog. Our units finally arrived in April 2022 at a hefty cost.

EGT: Where are you selling RestAngles?

CF: On our company website, at Lieber's Luggage in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and locally at markets in our co-operated "She Invented Alaskiosk."

EGT: What advice do you have for novice inventors developing a household product?

CF: Dream big, write things down and take that first step (research your market).

Have patience; progress may take longer than you think it should and cost more money than you planned.

There aren't any shortcuts, so go at a pace that you can handle mentally, physically, financially and emotionally.

Small hinges open big doors. Offer to help others when you can.

Mentors are everywhere. Look for groups that can offer inspiration and honest feedback. For me, there are two: an Alaskan Founder's group that meets virtually once a month, and a Facebook group called the "Women Inventors Club—Product-Based Entrepreneurs." You may be a one-person show, but you'll need others along your way. ☺

Details: RestAngles.com

Edith G Tolchin has written for *Inventors Digest* since 2000. She is an editor (opinionatededitor.com/testimonials), writer (edietolchin.com), and has specialized in China manufacturing since 1990 (egtglobaltrading.com).



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August 2023 Volume 39 Issue 8



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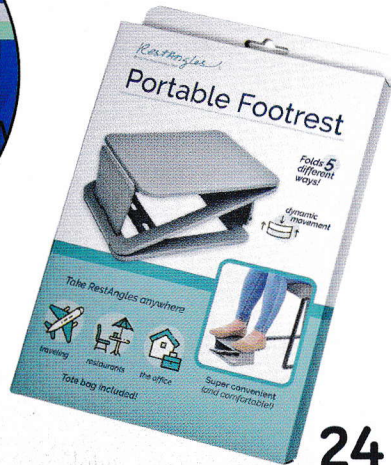
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