

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

## HEALTH BLOG

WSJ's blog on health and the business of health.

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### [Be Still My Fake, Beating Heart](#)

Posted by Heather Won Tesoriero

In the quaint New England town of Great Barrington, Mass., there's a group of kindly folks who spend their days churning out body parts— from colons to bladders to beating hearts.

Sounds like a Stephen King story or maybe even a slasher flick, we know. But this is for real. The town in the [Berkshire Hills](#) is home to the [Chamberlain Group](#), a company that makes lifelike models to train doctors.

The company does have its roots in Hollywood, though. The founders and chief engineers got their start in parts doing special effects work for films including “The Matrix,” “Eraser,” and “Judge Dredd.”

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The call came at a good time. Company co-founder Lisa Chamberlain says. “opportunities in film production were becoming more limited because of computer-generated” images. She and her husband Eric discovered they relished the challenge of making models for surgeons because they had to be even more realistic than those used in films. “We got hooked,” she says.

The market for synthetic body parts and training models is growing as training programs turn to technology to enhance learning that has relied on cadavers and animals for generations. Now the company is a supplier to Boston Scientific, Medtronic and the Cleveland Clinic.

What sets Chamberlain apart, the company says, is its lifelike body tissue, made from special polymers. We haven't dissected anything since a frog in high school biology lab, but we were struck by the company's beating heart trainer, which sells for \$5,000 or more depending on options. Coronary arteries for the heart are sold in packs of ten, allowing would-be surgeons to practice on vessels at \$12 a pop. Click [here](#) for more info on the heart, and click on the video to see it in action.

The next frontier: the Chamberlain Group is partnering with [Baystate Medical Center](#) in Springfield, Mass., to sell training systems, starting with bowel surgery. Baystate will provide the curriculum and Chamberlain will provide the parts.