

Body Parts Alive!

SynDaver Labs. The name sounds like a cloning company for dear departed Fido. While that's not what SynDaver Labs (www.syndaver.com) actually does, it's nonetheless a cutting-edge high-technology manufacturer. The company, based right here in the bay area, designs and manufactures highly complex synthetic human body parts: things like individual muscles, tendons, veins and arteries, and even complete thighs and torsos.



These patented and ultra-realistic body parts are used primarily by the medical device industry in product development studies. "Any time a company wants to sell a stent, a catheter, or any other medical device, they have to test it on something . . . typically animals, cadavers and often people," says Dr. Christopher Sakezles, the company's president. "I actually wish our products had been available back when I was designing medical devices for a living."

Everything the company makes is fabricated from specially designed composite materials. No silicone, rubber, glass or plastic is found in anything they make. In fact, much like real living tissue, their products are made primarily from water, fibers and salts. Their products are also made in such a way that individual components are replaceable. So, if you buy an arm or leg for example, you'd be able to replace individual muscles, tendons and veins as needed. "That's one of the cool things," adds Sakezles. "They're kind of like a jigsaw puzzles."

Dr. Sakezles says the goal of his company is not to save animals from research, although that's a nice side benefit of their work. Instead, he says, it's to improve safety, shorten development cycles, and make medical devices cheaper to produce. Aside from Fortune 500 manufacturers, their models are used by medical professionals in training and by military manufacturers in ballistics testing. "We're the only company in the world with this technology," says Sakezles. The company will soon be opening a private equity offering to fund initial expansion.