Solving a Puzzle Ring

These instructions are for solving a 4-ring puzzle ring something like this one. Your ring may not be identical to this one, but the important point is that when holding it so that the ‘cross point’ is nearest to you, the rings cross each other as shown. If your rings don’t cross like this, then your ring is probably a mirror image of this one and these instructions won’t work as they stand. You will have to either get a different set of instructions, or mentally mirror the pictures.

The first set of instructions show the Standard method, and is recommended for beginners, the second set show the Fast method. Don’t try the fast method until you have fully mastered the standard method. It looks easy, but experience teaches that most people have problems with it if they haven’t mastered the standard way.

**Standard Method**

The first thing to do is to identify each of the four rings. If you hold any ring so that the other three just hang down, you will notice that it makes a sort of chain with two rings in the middle and another at the end. The rings at each end are a pair, as are the two in the middle. Take time to get conversant with the rings ‘cos if you use the wrong ones the puzzle will be impossible.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** No force is required to assemble the puzzle ring; if you apply force you are likely to damage it.

Each ring consists of a head or pattern part, and a shank. The shank is the part that goes round your finger. The two pairs are called the V-rings and the Z-rings. The red lines indicate the essential difference between the pairs.

This pair are the V-rings, the one on the right is the Smooth-V (SV) and the other one is the Dented-V (DV). Don’t be confused by the fact that both rings are dented; SV has a single dent on each side, but is mostly smooth, and DV has a double dent. The red lines illustrate that the basic head shapes are like Vs.

This pair are the Z-rings, the one on the left is the Dented-Z (DZ) and the other one is the Smooth-Z (SZ). Only the SZ is a real Z, the other one is a mirror image, so it’s really a back-to-front Z.

**DZ** has a noticeable dent in the middle of the pattern, whereas **SZ** is quite smooth.

**Step 1.**

Start by finding the DV ring. It’s the one with two dents on each leg of the V.
Hold it so that the V points to the left as shown. This is important – you won’t be able to complete the ring if it points to the right. The SV ring will be at the bottom of the chain – bring it up to make the two Vs form a square as shown. Even if you are left-handed you will find it easier if you hold the rings in your left hand as shown in the photos.

**Step 2.**

The next step is to form a figure of ‘8’ with the two Z rings.

First make sure, when holding the V-rings as above, that SZ is nearest to you, as shown in this photo. If it isn’t then you won’t be able to assemble the ring without performing an extra step. The extra step is described in the section headed “Swapping the Z rings” below – don’t reverse DV and SV. If SZ is nearest to you then continue.

While holding DV and SV as shown, place the dent of DZ onto the bottoms of the V-rings and rotate it clockwise until it looks like this photo. At this point, place a finger through DZ as shown. Notice that you can use your little finger to hold SZ out of the way when manipulating DZ.

**Step 3.**

Now manipulate SZ so that the pattern part (the Z bit) fits on top of DZ to make a figure of ‘8’ surrounding the shanks of DV and SV. This step is easier if you simply place SZ onto the finger through DZ as shown in the photo. At this point it is essential that DZ and SZ fit together perfectly with their shanks lying flat against each other.

You can now release the V-rings, but don’t let go of the Z-rings.
Step 4.
Carefully rotate DV until the V is inside the ‘8’ as shown but don’t let it fold down.

Step 5.
Now rotate SV so its V is inside the ‘8’ and ensure that it is resting on top of DV as shown. If it isn’t on top you won’t be able to do the next step.

Step 6.
You can now allow the V-rings to fold down and the ring is complete. If the rings don’t fold down easily don’t force them down. Make sure that SV is on top of DV and they should fold down easily.

Swapping the Z rings
If, when trying to do Step 2, the SZ ring is furthest from you as shown is this photo, you will have to reverse DZ and SZ. Don’t try pushing one of the Zs through the other one; you are likely to damage the ring if you do.

Instead, you have to pass one of the Z-rings over the top of the V-rings, as shown in the next photo.
This photo shows how to reverse \textit{SZ} and \textit{DZ} by passing \textit{SZ} over the top of \textit{DV} and \textit{SV} – if \textit{SZ} is already nearest to you when \textit{DV} is pointing to the left, then you don’t need to do this step.

**The Fast Method**

\textbf{Important:} don’t try this method until you have mastered the standard method. Although its actually easier than the standard method, its \textit{much} more difficult to handle the rings, and unless you are thoroughly conversant with them it simply won’t work. Pay particular attention to the first photograph and make sure that \textit{DV} and \textit{SV} are as shown. Notice that the shanks are horizontal and the Vs face each other.

**Step 1.**

As in the standard method, start with the \textit{DV} ring on the left, but the two Vs are facing each other and pointing downwards as shown. Hold the two Vs between the thumb and 1st finger of the left hand, with \textit{SV} ‘hooked’ on top of \textit{DV}. The two Zs will then lie in the Vs as shown.

As in the standard method, ensure that \textit{SZ} is nearest to you; if it isn’t you must reverse them as before.

**Step 2.**

Form the figure ‘8’ in the two Vs – start with \textit{DZ} and twist it exactly as you did in Step 2 of the standard method, but with the dent of \textit{DZ} in the points of the Vs as shown here, making sure you don’t disturb the two V rings. This is not particularly easy at first, but you will soon get the knack.
Step 3.

This is the final step – hold the two Z-rings that make the ‘8’, let go of the two Vs, fold them down and the ring is complete.
I told you it was quick.