

ASSEMBLING *MOON PI*

These are instructions for assembling the sculpture *Moon Pi*. You'll need:

- 3 metal pieces of the puzzle
- 4 3/8" balls
- 1 rubber band, not too long
- Scissors

The balls may be of any material; the puzzle is supplied with one set in neoprene rubber and one in frosted glass. (Replacements and other materials can be obtained from <http://www.mcmaster.com>.) It's an easier assembly with the rubber balls, while glass is prettier but a bit more difficult.

To begin, lay the pieces on a flat surface as shown at above right, then pick them up by the top three "arms". When this is done smoothly, the pieces should fall naturally into the proper interlacement. Put your rubber band around the equator, adjusting the three pairs of arm-ends to fall near each other.



Check that the three detents at the center are aligned, then put the first ball in from above. The rubber band should be just tight enough to hold it lightly, so tight that the ball squirts out. If you have big hands, you may be able to hold the ball in place with thumb and forefinger.

Now for the tricky part. Keeping the central ball engaged, arrange things so that the arm-ends come together. When the arms are near each other on all sides, put in the first outer ball. Then, holding it in place, add the second. If you had three identical hands, this would be simple.

When two outer balls are in place, hold them as best you can with one hand, and add the third with the other. It will probably take a few tries to figure out a hand position that works for you...if it makes you feel better, it took me two months to get it the first time.

When that last ball pops into place, take a breath. Check that the central ball is engaged in all three detents, and that each outer ball is at the center of the arc surrounding it, as at right.

Lastly, reach in with scissors and snip that rubber band. Congratulations, you have a completed *Moon Pi*!



P.S. If you have assembled this piece without a rubber band, I'd like to hear how you did it. Write, and glory shall be yours in the next edition of this solution sheet.

Happy Puzzling!