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# PUZZLING TIPS

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MAY 16, 2025  
THE TREE ROOST  
<https://thetreeroost.com>



## Tips to Go from Perplexing Puzzles to Profound Enjoyment

1. Get quality puzzles that inspire or charm you. You'll find many good sources of these.
2. Get a large professional puzzling board with drawers.
3. Share the puzzling experience with someone you love. Your synergy will create breakthroughs.
4. Create the outside border first. Find the pieces with one straight edge (two straight edges for the corners). Be aware of the puzzle's dimensions so you know the puzzle border is complete.
5. Sort the pieces by color or subject matter so you don't have to scan 500 or 1000 pieces over and over again to find a single piece. Go where the colors you need are to be found.
6. Know the styles and special talents of your fellow puzzlers. You've heard of left-brain and right-brain talents. Some folks notice the details: the shapes, outlines, and colors of pieces. Some folks like to "paint a picture." Let them begin with one of the most visible and inspiring images within the larger puzzle. You may wish to march across a field of green grass. Your partner might prefer to "build the bunny" sitting in the grass.
7. For fun and easy reference, notice and name the shapes of puzzle pieces: tired shoulders, clover leaf/arrowhead, pointy corners, slender vs. wide, doober on two sides or three, etc.
8. Play music in the background as you puzzle. Take a break now and then to avoid blurry eyes.
9. Be aware of lighting. Puzzles look dramatically different in dim vs. bright, indirect vs. direct.
10. Do not compete with your partner(s). Delight in their successes. You will share the joy of the completed puzzle. There will be magical moments when two puzzlers seem to be reading each other's minds and *seeing what others cannot yet see*. Give "high fives" when they do.
11. Be prepared. Toward the end of your puzzling adventure, you will fear that there are just not enough of the right pieces to do the job. Hang in there. You will suddenly see a brown puzzling piece with a tiny yellow corner and say, "There it is, the piece I didn't believe existed." Or..."I was looking for dark brown pieces, when they're actually dark purple."
12. Get ready for the exciting momentum toward the end when *fewer open spaces* and *fewer pieces competing* means that the race to the end will come soon and be exhilarating. Rub your hands gently over the finished puzzle. Gaze in wonder at your delightful creation.
13. Go to Hobby Lobby (or other Craft & Hobby store) to get two large, corrugated plastic sheets to slide your puzzle onto, to cover it and then tape the two plastic sheets together. Let Hobby Lobby mount your puzzle for about \$10. Hang it on the wall or put it in a puzzle bin to be retrieved and enjoyed over and over again. Or...you can re-bag the puzzle and do it again next month or give it to a friend or family member.
14. Bon Voyage! –Your Puzzling Pals, The Checketts at: <https://thetreeroost.com>