

RECOMMENDATION ENGINE

Twisty Puzzles

The Rubik's Cube was one of the best-selling toys ever. Revisit the classic, then see if you can conquer some of its offspring. —Bryan Lufkin

BRAINSTRING (ADVANCED)

Perfect for: Getting tied up in knots **Geek factor:** It's the spittin' image of a microbe. Also, 12 strings and 24 knobs ensure that one wrong move will result in a tangled snarl. \$17

DAYAN GEM CUBE III

Perfect for: Puzzling with flair—the Gem comes with stickers for customizing its look

Geek factor: Dubbed a "helicopter dodecahedron," the 12-sided figure with spinning faces may be the Airwolf of twisty puzzles. \$42

V-CUBE 7 ILLUSION

Perfect for:

Channeling the spirit of '80s ska **Geek factor:** First, this bulging two-tone cube hits you with optical illusions. Then it kicks your brain's ass with 49 squares per side. \$40

ORIGINAL RUBIK'S CUBE

Perfect for: Busing your brain while watching reruns of *Night Court*

Geek factor: The World Cube Association pits Rubik's nuts against one another in speed runs. The youngest champ? Three-year-old Shengzhi Gao at 1:02:30. \$12

BRAIN TWIST

Perfect for:

Throwing at your sibling's head **Geek factor:** Rubik's Cube becomes Rubik's Tetrahedron. Twist the spikes to match the colors, but another challenge awaits: The toy flips inside out, and you have to match that side, too. \$17

GEAR CUBE EXTREME

Perfect for: Getting in touch with your inner gearhead **Geek factor:** Inspired by an idea from BitTorrent cofounder Bram Cohen, this toothed menace triple-scrambles its colors with every move you make. \$36

PLANETS

Perfect for: Combining the topography of the moon with the portability of a stress-relief ball

Geek factor: Ergonomic, sleek design. Rotate and align like-colored planets. Mind the craters, which can lock neighboring balls' ability to rotate. \$15