The Paper Napkin Trick

It's a good idea to practice this trick where spilled water won't do any harm.

What to do: Drape the napkin over the edge of a kitchen counter or table. Place the plastic cup of water on one corner of the napkin about 1 inch (2.5 cm) from the edge. Pull the napkin quickly away from under the plastic cup.

What happens: The napkin comes out—without any water spilling.

Why: The cup doesn't overturn because of the tendency of things at rest to stay at rest. It's that old law of motion—inertia—at work. If it does spill it's because you're not pulling the napkin fast enough or with enough force.

YOU NEED

• paper napkin
• plastic cup of water