

# Catching a Coin on Your Elbow

Here is a great trick that is also a neat science experiment.

**What to do:** Place one coin on your elbow. Hold your arm parallel to the floor or the coin will fall off.

You are now going to catch the coin that is on your elbow. That wouldn't be much of a trick except for one thing. You are going to catch the coin in the hand of the same arm.

Here's how it works. In one sudden, very quick move you will drop your arm. This will cause your open hand to snap forward. The arrow in the drawing shows the direction your hand will move.

At the same time, your elbow will fall away from under the coin.

**What happens:** As your elbow moves from under the coin, your hand will come down above. When you get your timing right, you'll catch the coin every time.

**Why:** Since the coin is still it tends to remain in that position. Good old inertia again! When your elbow moves rapidly it just drops out from under the coin. This leaves the coin hanging in air.

Gravity pulls the coin toward the ground, but inertia gives it a slow start. Your hand is faster than the coin because your hand is already moving.

## YOU NEED

coin



### Catching More Coins

It's not difficult to flip a lot of coins from your elbow into your hand. After you have the hang of catching one coin, add a second on top of the first, and then three or four or more and catch them all at once.



365 Simple Science  
Experiments  
Churchill, Loeschig,  
Mandell, 1997