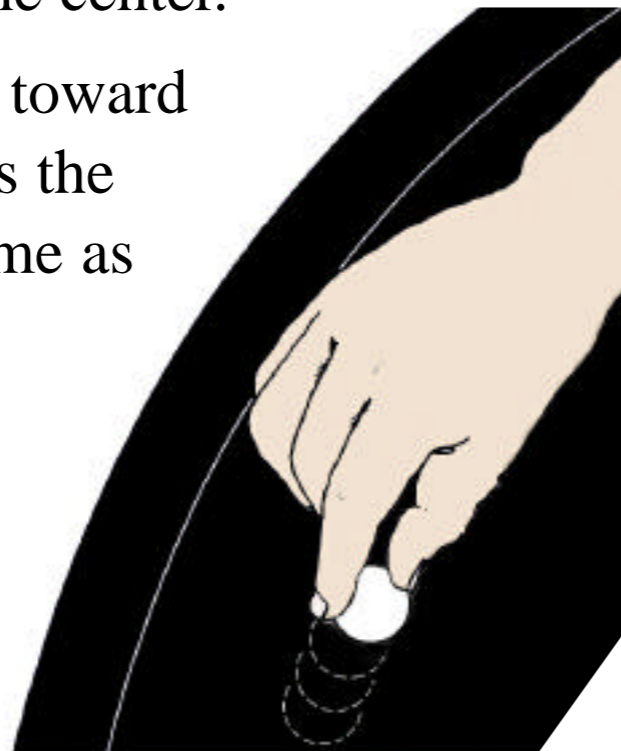


Gravity Well

Balls spin around this dish like planets orbiting the sun.

Try this:

- Roll the ball parallel to the outer edge of the dish, as shown in the diagram (this may take a little practice). Notice that the ball “orbits” around the dish in a circular path. Also notice that a complete orbit takes less and less time as the ball gets closer to the center.
- Roll the ball slightly in toward the center of the dish. Is the shape of its path the same as before?
- Try rolling the ball at different speeds.



What's going on?

This dish was designed so that the balls act much like planets orbiting around the sun. Just as the balls move in nearly circular paths around the hole, planets have roughly circular orbits around the sun. The farther the ball is from the hole—and a planet is from the sun—the more time it takes to complete one orbit.

