

# Start at the Finish



*Rev up your game this spring by working on your finish position before anything else*

BY DAN COLVIN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEONARD KAMSLER

**W**hen you're trying to regain your feel at the start of the golf season, it's easy to get overloaded with swing thoughts — you might refer to it as paralysis by analysis. If this sounds familiar, I suggest you concentrate on your finish rather than your swing. The reason? Every great golfer has a great finish. Your finish corresponds directly to the quality of your release, and therefore impact, and to the type of shot you want to hit — draw, fade, low, high, etc. So if you can groove a strong finish the rest of your game will round into shape, just in time for spring.

## Practice Your Balance

The first fundamental to a good finish is balance. You want to rotate the core of your body so that you face the target and achieve balance over your left leg (*right*). This is called being “posted” on your left leg. If you're in balance, you should be able to hold this position for several seconds.



Legendary teacher Henry Picard had a drill for practicing a draw/hook finish, and you can implement it as you work on your balance. Take a step back from the ball and hold the club in the address position (*above*). Then focus on rotating your forearms and body through, and pause when your hands are at about thigh-height. The toe of the club-head should have turned significantly, so the clubface is closed (*below*). After you check this position, continue on to a full finish. While this particular drill will help you hit a draw, you can also use it to work on your overall balance.



## Shotmaking: No Club Necessary

You don't need a club to effectively practice the finish you'll need to hit a draw, fade or a straight ball:

**Draw:** Cup your hands together, with your left thumb on top of the knuckles of your right hand (*right*). Then, swing to a finish position and make sure your left forearm is leaning away from you (*far right*).



**Fade:** Cup your hands together, but with your right thumb on top of the knuckles of your left hand (*right*). Then, swing to a finish position that has your left forearm leaning toward you (*far right*).



**Straight ball:** The most challenging shot in golf seems easy when you practice the finish. Start with your fingers and thumbs woven together in a neutral position (*right*). Then, make sure your left arm is straight up and down at the finish (*far right*).



Discover world-famous links courses where fairway bunkers bring out your best game while cliff tops overlooking the Atlantic take your breath away. Test your skills at Royal County Down or tee off like the pros at the K Club — host of the 2006 Ryder Cup. Then sit back and celebrate your best shots at the 19th hole where you can trade stories with fellow golfers.

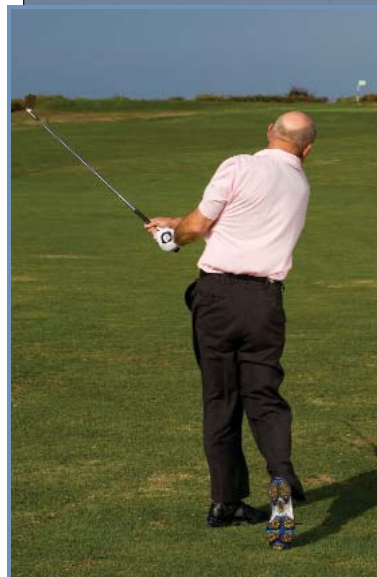
To discover more, visit us at [discoverireland.com](http://discoverireland.com) or call 1.800.SHAMROCK.

Your very own Ireland 

## Knock it Down

Especially on windy courses like Fishers Island, a reliable knock-down shot is a must. To hit it low when you need to, it helps to practice the type of finish that produces a shot with a low, piercing trajectory.

To finish off a knock-down shot (*main photo, below*), you want to swing the club on a shallow plane around your body, so that your finish position is about hip-height (*inset, left*). Just like the finish for a high shot, you want to be in balance and feel like your chest is facing the target. Now that you know how to finish, you're ready to start your year! ■



**Dan Colvin** is a two-time PGA section teacher of the year, and is the head professional at the Fishers Island Club in Fishers Island, New York.

# JOIN THE TEAM



Be part of a premier championship at your club

Play in The PGA McGladrey Team Championship and start your road to Pinehurst!

Sign up today at [PGA.com/teamchampionship](http://PGA.com/teamchampionship)



RSM McGladrey is "The Official Accounting, Tax and Business Consulting Firm of The PGA of America."