

Escape like a Tour Pro

Contrary to popular belief, Tour Pros are human. They miss fairways like the rest of us. According to the stats, Martin Kaymer and Luke Donald barely hit more fairways than they miss. If you could hit two out of every three fairways, you'd

be among the European Tour's top 40 straightest hitters.

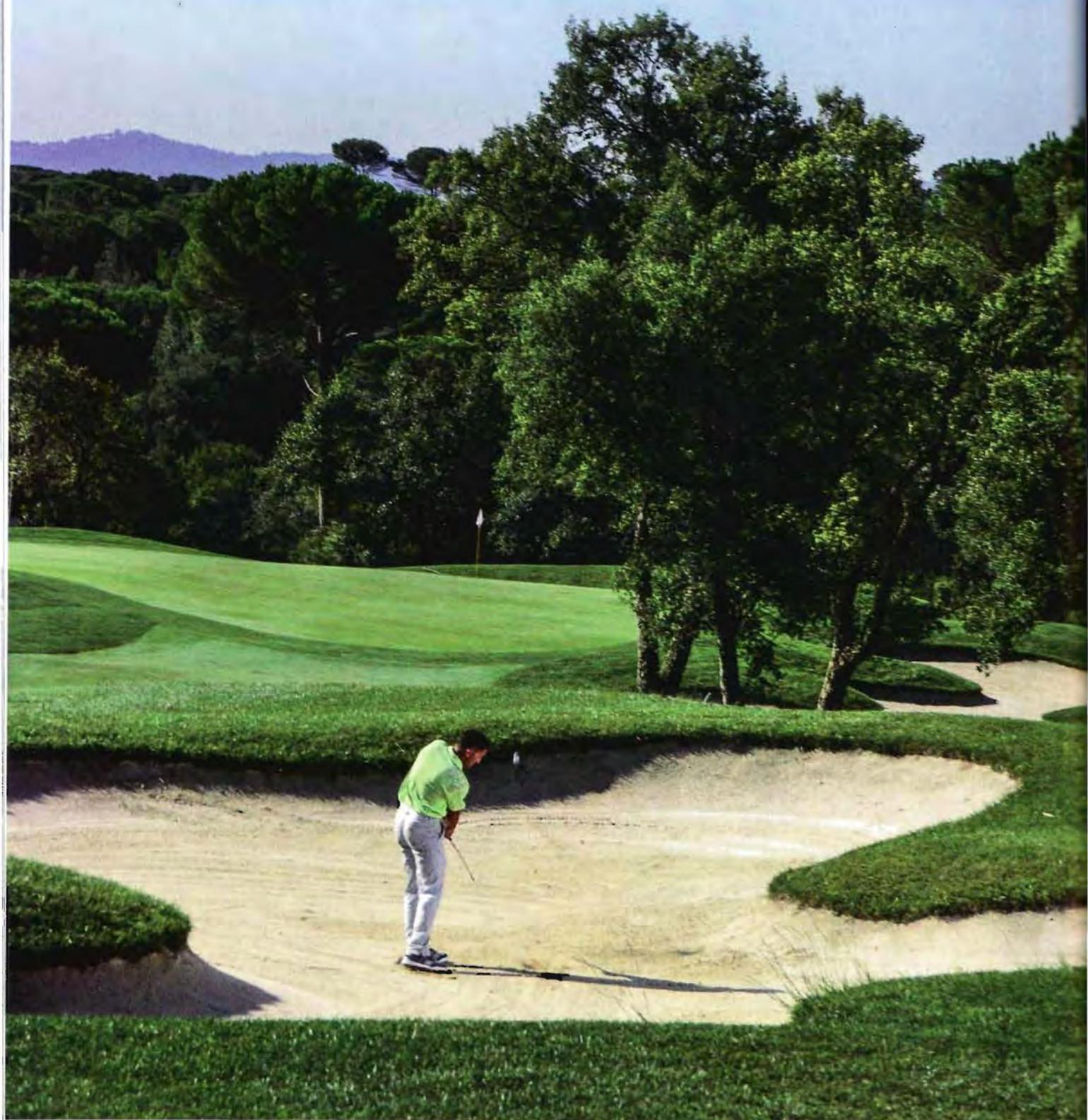
Where all Tour Pros excel, however, is in their ability to escape trouble when they do miss the short grass. Whether it's having to shape the ball, strike it cleanly from

sand or find an escape route through timber, they rarely fail to finish on or near the green.

Here, we look at the secrets they employ in all three scenarios. Put them into play and you can start saving par more often.



By Enric Lopez,
Head Professional
at PGA Catalunya
Resort, Girona

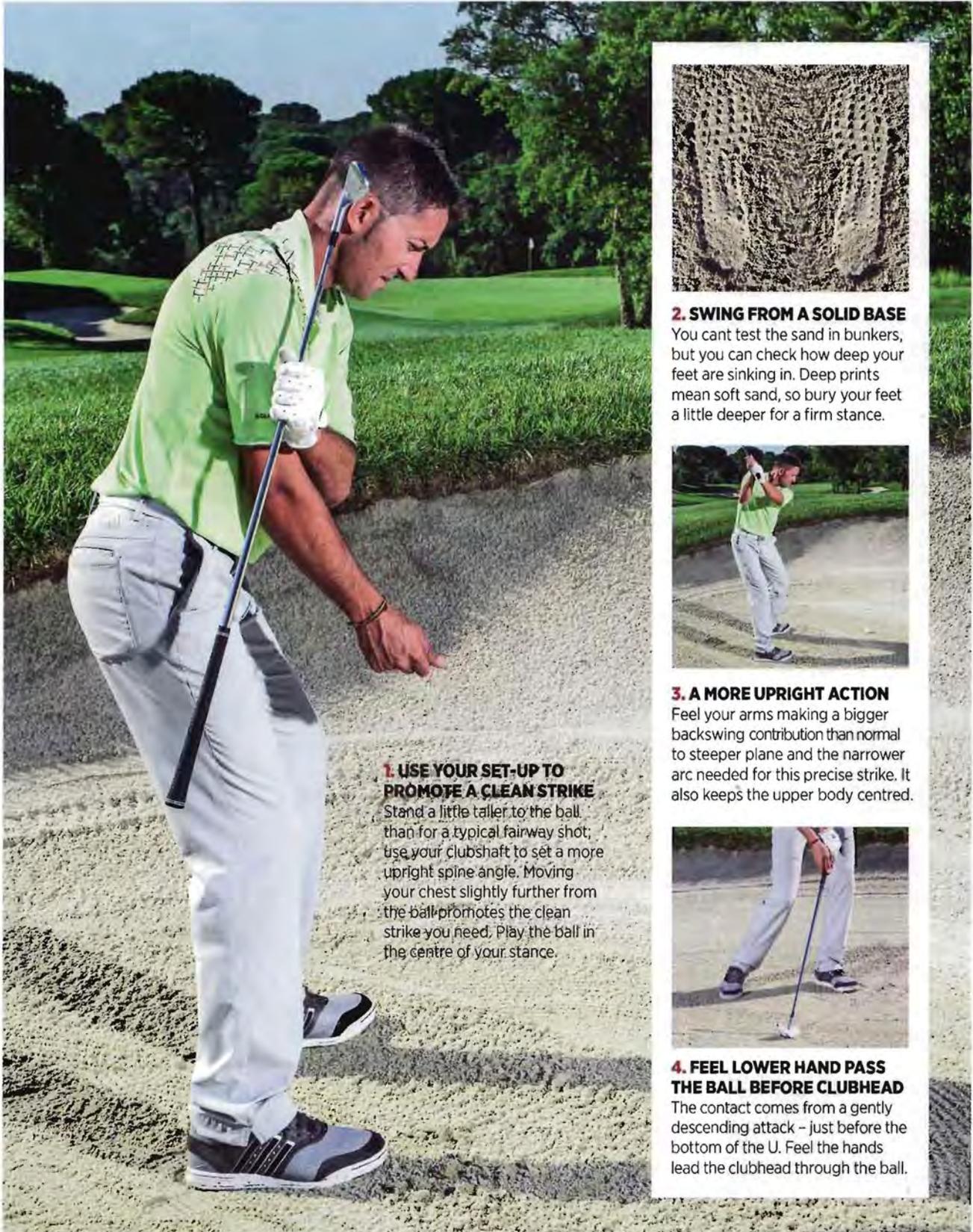


1. Find the green from fairway bunkers

Unless the lip is severe, any Tour Pro will expect to find the green from a fairway trap. The key to this is of course a clean strike; even a few grains of sand between

face and ball is enough to rob the shot of vital yards. You'll find that clean strike by making key changes to your set-up and swing to promote a U-shaped action. This

narrower arc creates a short, flat spot at the bottom, limiting the chance of heavy contact and letting the club whisk the ball off the surface. Follow this four-step plan...



1. USE YOUR SET-UP TO PROMOTE A CLEAN STRIKE

Stand a little taller to the ball than for a typical fairway shot; use your clubshaft to set a more upright spine angle. Moving your chest slightly further from the ball promotes the clean strike you need. Play the ball in the centre of your stance.



2. SWING FROM A SOLID BASE

You can't test the sand in bunkers, but you can check how deep your feet are sinking in. Deep prints mean soft sand, so bury your feet a little deeper for a firm stance.



3. A MORE UPRIGHT ACTION

Feel your arms making a bigger backswing contribution than normal to steeper plane and the narrower arc needed for this precise strike. It also keeps the upper body centred.



4. FEEL LOWER HAND PASS THE BALL BEFORE CLUBHEAD

The contact comes from a gently descending attack - just before the bottom of the U. Feel the hands lead the clubhead through the ball.