

ALL ABOUT FINESSES

To finesse in bridge simply means to surround a high card(s) that an opponent may hold. There are many different types of finesesses. Examples include leading towards high cards to take a finesse or leading a high card of your own with the intention of trapping your opponent's high card.

SIMPLE FINESSES

The simple finesse requires leading towards high cards and simply covering whichever card your opponent plays.



In example a), declarer leads towards the ♠AQ, inserting the Q if the opponent plays low. Similarly, example b), declarer leads towards the ♠Q hoping the ♠K is behind. The ♠Q will win in both examples 50% of the time.

- Don't lead out unsupported honours

PUSH FINESSES

The term push finesse refers to leading a high card to capture an opponent's honour card. The most common are combinations missing only the king.



In a), declarer would lead the ♠J. If the next player holds the SK it will be trapped. In b), the ♠10 is missing. If declarer leads the ♠J and the next player covers with the ♠K, the ♠10 will become a winner.

- Don't lead the Jack without the 10.

REPEATING FINESSES

The term push finesse refers to leading a high card to capture an opponent's honour card. The most common are combinations missing only the king.



In a), you are missing the ♠K but hold all of the support cards down to the ♠9. If the ♠K is inside you would like to remain in declarer's hand to repeat a successful. Start by

leading the ♠Q. If the next player covers with the ♠K, all cards are high. If they do not cover and the ♠Q wins the trick, declarer remains in hand to repeat the finesse.

In b), similar positive thoughts should be applied by declarer. Picture West with ♠Kxxx. A good defender won't cover when you advance the ♠J. Declarer will need to be in hand three times to succeed.

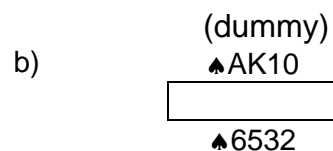
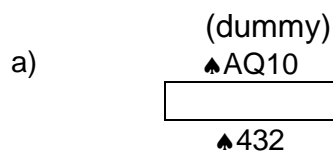
If declarer leads the ♠J and it wins the trick, all of dummy's spades are now higher than declarer's. Dummy must be on lead after the 2nd finesse. Declarer is now required to waste an entry (if one exists) back to hand to repeat the finesse. How to avoid this situation?

- Lead the ♠9 on the 1st round. Dummy contributes the ♠4
- Lead the ♠J on the 2nd round. Dummy plays the ♠10 underneath.
- Declarer remains in hand to take a successful 3rd finesse.

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">11</div> <div style="text-align: center;">D</div>	N undefined ♠ J963 ♥ 543 ♦ 5432 ♣ A4	<table border="1"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>3♣</td><td>P</td><td>2NT</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>3♥</td><td>P</td><td>3♠</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>4♠</td><td>P</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td></td><td>P</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	3♣	P	2NT	P	3♥	P	3♠	P	4♠	P	P	P		P	
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FINESSING v MORE THAN ONE CARD

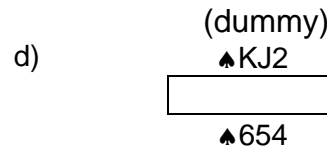
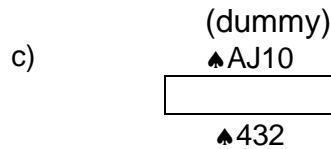
The term push finesse refers to leading a high card to capture an opponent's honour card. The most common are combinations missing only the king.



In a), your best chance for 3 tricks is to play for both ♠KJ to be onside. On the 1st round lead the ♠2, when West plays low, insert the ♠10. If this wins the trick, return to hand to play low to the ♠Q on the 2nd round.

In b), the situation is similar. Your best chance for 3 tricks is the play the ♠2 towards dummy. When West plays low, finesse the ♠10. In both a) & b) the chance of declarer securing 3 tricks is 25%.

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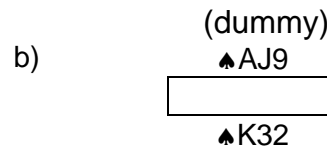
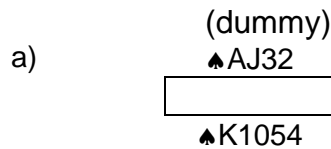
In c), your best chance for 2 tricks is to play for either the ♠K or ♠Q to be onside. On the 1st round lead the ♠2, when West plays low, insert the ♠10. If this loses to an honour, return to hand to play low to the ♠J on the 2nd round. The chance of 2 tricks is 75%.

In b), you may commence your journey hoping for 1 trick but end up with 2 tricks. Lead the ♠4 towards dummy. If West plays low, insert the ♠J. Worst case scenario this loses to the ♠Q. If so, return to hand via another suit and lead towards the ♠K. You will score a trick if the ♠A is onside. Chance of success. 1 trick = 75%. 2 tricks = 25%.

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2-WAY & BACKWARDS FINESSES

The term push finesse refers to leading a high card to capture an opponent's honour card. The most common are combinations missing only the king.



In a), we have classic case of 8-ever. Cash a top honour and follow with a finesse for the ♠Q either way on the 2nd round.

In b), we are missing the ♠10 so the 2-way finesse doesn't exist. The classic line for 3 tricks is to cash the ♠K and finesse the ♠J. What if declarer has sufficient evidence that points to the ♠Q sitting over the ♠J. The traditional finesse would lose.

In this case declarer could lead the ♠J from dummy. A 'backwards finesse'. When East covers with the ♠Q, declarer wins the ♠K and finesses the ♠9. This is less likely to succeed compared to a traditional line of play as it requires both the ♠Q & ♠10 to be in specific locations.

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THE INTRA-FINESSE

This is a rare finesse that is employed when missing 3 honours. It normally entails taking a deep finesse on the 1st round followed by a smother play on the next round.



In a), dummy leads the ♠2, when East plays the ♠7, declarer finesses the ♠9. This loses to the ♠Q. On the 2nd round declarer leads the ♠J pinning East's ♠10. If West covers declarer wins the ♠A and the ♠8 is high. If West does not cover the ♠J, declarer plays low from dummy.

In b), if West was marked with the missing HCP, declarer may play for an intra-finesse. On the 1st round lead the ♠4 from dummy, finessing the ♠9 in hand. This loses to the ♠J. On the 2nd round of the suit, declarer leads the ♠Q smothering East's ♠10 in a situation analogous to a).

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