

Limiting your Hand

A Bridge Lesson!

Some bids in bridge LIMIT your hand to a specific shape and point count range.

This is nice because now that you have shown your hand your PARTNER gets to make the decision as to where you play and how high you go.

For example: 1NT opening bid

For most players a 1NT opening bid
LIMITS their hand to 15, 16 or 17 HCP.

You will NEVER have 14.

You will NEVER have 18.

If you open 1NT with either less than you promise or more than you promise it is hard for Partner to make the correct decision as to where to place the contract.

For instance – you open the bidding
1NT and you have 14 HCP.

Partner will think you have 15 HCP
and will bid game with 10 HCP

But $14+10=24$. Not quite enough to
make a game...

OR you open the bidding 1NT and you
have 18 HCP.

Partner will think you have 17 HCP at
the most and will "Pass" with 7 HCP

But $18+7=25$. Enough to make a game...

So when you LIMIT your hand you MUST make sure that your hand falls within those pre-defined LIMITS.

Otherwise Partner might not be able to figure out what level you can safely play at.

What bids LIMIT your hand?

Bidding ANY level of NT LIMITS your hand.

Supporting Partner LIMITS your hand.

Rebidding your suit **LIMITS** your hand.

Let's go over these as a nice little review...

Bidding NT to limit your hand

Opening NT

Opening 1NT LIMITS your hand to 15-17 HCP

Even if you DON'T play that NT range

(Note: if you don't play that range then you MUST state your range in duplicate)

then you DO play some other range.

Make sure your hand point count is IN your NT range.

Opening 2NT LIMITS your hand to 20-21 HCP

Even if you DON'T play that NT range then you
DO play some other range.

Make sure your hand is IN your NT range.

Opening 3NT LIMITS your hand to 25-27 HCP

Even if you DON'T play that NT range then you
DO play some other range.

Make sure your hand is IN your NT range.

Responding NT

When Partner opens the bidding, RESPONDING
1NT LIMITS your hand to 6 to a bad 10 HCP

You will also DENY having a major you can bid at
the 1 Level

This 1NT bid does NOT show a balanced hand.
You could be stuck because of your points!

When Partner opens the bidding, RESPONDING
2NT LIMITS your hand to 11 or 12 HCP

Some play this bid as forcing (old school) so they
show 13-15 HCP.

(Ask if you are not sure.)

Regardless of point count, responding 2NT will DENY having ANY four card major and should ALWAYS show a balanced hand.

With an unbalanced hand you now have enough points that other options are available to you.

When Partner opens the bidding, RESPONDING
3NT LIMITS your hand to 13 to 15 HCP

Some play this bid as stronger (old school) so
they show 16-18 HCP.

Ask if you are not sure.

Regardless of point count, responding 3NT will DENY having ANY four card major and should ALWAYS show a balanced hand.

With an unbalanced hand you now have enough points that you have other options available to you (ie showing your suit!)

Rebidding NT

When Opener opens the bidding and then REBIDS any level of NT they will limit their hand.

Watch out for the auction! When Responder bids at the 1 level rebids show a different point count for Opener versus when Responder bids at the 2 level.

Responder bids at the 1 Level.

Opener

1♣

1NT

Responder

1♦

When Opener rebids 1NT (after a 1 level response) they show a balanced hand with FEWER than 15 HCP – after all with 15 HCP they would have opened 1NT.

Opener

1♣

1NT

Responder

1♦

Opener will ALWAYS bid a four card major at the 1 level BEFORE bidding any level of NT.

Opener

1♣

1NT

Responder

1♦

In addition to their point count Opener DENIES having a four card major they could bid at the ONE level.

In this auction Opener will NOT have a four card major.



Opener

1♣

1NT

Responder

1♠

However in this auction Opener COULD have four  since they would not be able to mention the  suit at the 1 level.

Opener

1♣

1NT

Responder

1♠

Opener will ALWAYS support Responder's major
BEFORE bidding any level of NT.

So in this auction Opener will NOT have four ♠

Opener

1♣

2NT

Responder

1♦

When Opener rebids 2NT (after a 1 level response) they show a balanced hand with MORE than 17 HCP – after all with 17 HCP they would have opened 1NT – and FEWER than 20 HCP – with 20 HCP they would have opened 2NT.

Opener

1♣

2NT

Responder

1♦

Opener will ALWAYS bid a four card major at the 1 level BEFORE bidding any level of NT.

Opener

1♣

2NT

Responder

1♦

In addition to their point count Opener DENIES having a four card major they could bid at the ONE level.

In this auction Opener will NOT have a four card major.



Opener

1♣

2NT

Responder

1♠

However in this auction Opener COULD have four  since they would not be able to mention the  suit at the 1 level.

Opener

1♣

2NT

Responder

1♠

Opener will ALWAYS support Responder's major
BEFORE bidding any level of NT.

So in this auction Opener will NOT have four ♠

Responder bids at the 2 Level.

Opener

1♦

2NT

Responder

2♣

When Opener rebids 2NT after a 2 level response they show a balanced hand with FEWER than 15 HCP – after all with 15 HCP they would have opened 1NT.

Opener

1♦

2NT

Responder

2♣

The reason why the point count is still MINIMUM is that 2NT is the LOWEST level Opener can bid at! 1NT is no longer an option for them.

Opener

1♦

2NT

Responder

2♣

Since Responder could have bid a four card major BEFORE responding 2♣ Opener is no longer allowed to show a four card major unless they have enough values to force to game.

Opener

1♦

2NT

Responder

2♣

So in this auction Opener could have one or even two four card majors.

However they are MINIMUM and Responder is allowed to “Pass” with fewer than game values.

Opener

1♦

3NT

Responder

2♣

When Opener rebids 3NT after a 2 level response they show a balanced hand with enough values for game if Responder has 10+ HCP.

Opener

1♦

3NT

Responder

2♣

But since with 15-17 HCP they would have opened 1NT and with 14 HCP they would not have enough to force to a game this range must be the 18-19 point count range.

Opener

1♦

3NT

Responder

2♣

Here Opener WOULD have enough to show a four card major so they do deny having that.

That's a lot of ranges!

Let's put them to the test!

Question 1

♠ KT8

♥ A53

♦ KJ832

♣ A6

Your call?

- A) Open 1♦ and rebid 1NT
- B) Open 1NT
- C) Open 1♦ and rebid 2NT
- D) Open 1♦ and rebid 2♦

Answer 1

♠ KT8
♥ A53
♦ KJ832
♣ A6

- A)
- B) Open 1NT
- C)
- D)

This is the ONLY way to show a balanced hand with 15 HCP

Question 2

♠ KT8
♥ A53
♦ K832
♣ AJ6

Partner

1♣

RHO

Pass

You!

???

Answer 2

♠ KT8
♥ A53
♦ K832
♣ AJ6

Partner	RHO	You!
1♣	Pass	3NT

This gets across the balanced hand with the 13 to 15 HCP.

Question 3

♠ KT8

♥ A53

♦ 832

♣ J653

Partner

1♥

RHO

Pass

You!

???

Answer 3

♠ KT8
♥ A53
♦ 832
♣ J653

Partner	RHO	You!
1♥	Pass	2♥

You are balanced but support Partner's MAJOR first!

Question 4

♠ Q8
♥ AJ3
♦ Q832
♣ QJ53

Partner

1♠

RHO

Pass

You!

???

Answer 4

♠ Q8
♥ AJ3
♦ Q832
♣ QJ53

Partner	RHO	You!
1♠	Pass	2NT

This shows your
balanced hand with 11
or 12 HCP.

Question 5

♠ AQ8

♥ AK3

♦ KJ82

♣ QJ3

Your call?

- A) Open 1♦ and rebid 1NT
- B) Open 1♦ and rebid 2NT
- C) Open 1♦ and rebid 3NT
- D) Open 2NT

Answer 5

♠ AQ8
♥ AK3
♦ KJ82
♣ QJ3

Your call?

- A)
- B)
- C)
- D) Open 2NT

Only way to show a balanced hand with 20 or 21 HCP

Question 6

♠ 8753
♥ A3
♦ AQ2
♣ J653

Partner

1♥

RHO

Pass

You!

???

Answer 6

♠ 8753
♥ A3
♦ AQ2
♣ J653

Partner	RHO	You!
1♥	Pass	1♠

You MUST show Partner your four card major (no matter how ugly it is) before bidding NT !

Question 7

♠ QT8

♥ A3

♦ AK832

♣ AJ6

Your call?

- A) Open 1♦ and rebid 1NT
- B) Open 1NT
- C) Open 1♦ and rebid 2NT
- D) Open 1♦ and rebid 3♦

Answer 7

♠ QT8

♥ A3

♦ AK832

♣ AJ6

Your call?

A)

B)

C) Open 1♦ and rebid 2NT

D)

This is the ONLY way to show a balanced hand with 18 HCP

Question 8

♠ AQ3

♥ KJ3

♦ AQ2

♣ J653

Partner

1♣

RHO

Pass

You!

???

Answer 8

♠ AQ3
♥ KJ3
♦ AQ2
♣ J653

Partner	RHO	You!
1♣	Pass	1♦

Yikes! You'd like to bid 3NT but you have TOO MANY POINTS. You have 17 which is NOT in the 13-15 range.

Answer 8

♠ AQ3
♥ KJ3
♦ AQ2
♣ J653

Partner	RHO	You!
1♣	Pass	1♦

So you are stuck. Bid a new suit. Partner **MUST** bid again. Maybe they will limit their hand and you can place the contract.

Question 9

♠ A3
♥ J863
♦ AQ2
♣ Q653

Partner

1♠

RHO

Pass

You!

???

Answer 9

♠ A3
♥ J863
♦ AQ2
♣ Q653

Partner	RHO	You!
1♠	Pass	2♣

Bid your four card suits
up the line.

Question 10

♠ A3
♥ J863
♦ AQ2
♣ Q653

Partner	RHO	You!
1♠	Pass	2♣

You'd like to bid 3NT to get your balanced 13-15 hand across. WHY can't you?

Question 10

♠ A3
♥ J863
♦ AQ2
♣ Q653

Partner	RHO	You!
1♠	Pass	3NT!!!

Bidding 3NT DENIES having a four card major.

You have four ♥

How'd you do?

8 - 10 – You know your ranges!

6 - 7 – Decent enough...but a review can't hurt!

4 – 5 – Hmm – re-read this slide show to remind you of the basics!

< 4 – Better do some reviewing QUICK before the game!

GOOD LUCK TONIGHT!