

THE BASICS OF HOW TO “COUNT LOSERS” - LOSING TRICK COUNT (LTC)

- Look at the top three cards in each suit
- Count anything that is not an Ace, King or Queen.

What if I have a short suit – a suit with less than 3 cards?

Doubleton – count anything that is not an Ace or King. **Singleton** – count anything that is not an Ace. **Void** – count 0

This can be refined a little but basically that is all there is to it!¹

EXAMPLE



6 Losers – 1 spade, 2 hearts, 2 clubs, 1 diamond.



4 Losers – 1 spade, 1 diamond, 1 club, 1 heart



3 losers – 0 hearts, 2 clubs, 1 diamonds, 0 spades



8 losers – 2 hearts, 1 spade, 3 diamonds, 2 clubs

WHAT IS LTC USED FOR?

Loser Count is used for deciding “how high” when a fit has been found. It improves accuracy rather than only using Total Points (see “*Modern LTC*” and “*Help Trial Bid*” lessons on how to do this).

WHAT IS LTC NOT USED FOR?

- * Loser Count is not much use for No Trumps – it’s not used for deciding “how high” for No Trump contracts
- * Loser Count is not the same as “counting losers” to plan Declarer play in a suit contract (see “*Declarer Play*” lessons).
- * Loser Count instead of HCP is not used to evaluate a borderline hand for opening one of a suit. If using LTC then use HCP too (see *Klinger*).

¹ See Ron Klinger’s *Modern LTC* for further reading.

PRACTICE COUNTING LOSERS

How many losers in each of these holdings?

Row 1	J 8 7	J 8 7 4 3 2	87432	8 74	Row 1: Each holding in Row 1 has 3 losers
Row 2	A 54	K762	A9754	54	Row 2: Each holding in Row 2 has 2 losers
Row 3	AK5	AK32	AQ764	K	Row 3: Each holding in Row 3 has 1 loser
Row 4	AKQ	AKQ2	AKQ52	A	Row 4: Each holding in Row 4 has 0 losers

Now put it all together - how many losers in each of these hands?

HAND 1	HAND 2	HAND 3	HAND 4
♠ J87	♠ AQ62	♠ QJ62	♠ Q8432
♥ 9543	♥ 5432	♥ QJ98	♥ Q7542
♦ J109	♦ K7	♦ QJ32	♦ AK3
♣ 543	♣ K54	♣ Q	♣ -

Hand 1: 12 LOSERS.

3 spades, 3 hearts,
3 diamonds, 3 clubs

Hand 2: 7 LOSERS

1 spade, 3 hearts,
1 diamond, 2 clubs

Hand 3: 7 LOSERS

2 spades, 2 hearts,
2 diamonds, 1 club

Hand 4: 5 LOSERS

2 spades, 2 hearts,
1 diamond, 0 clubs

This will all come to you easily with a bit of practice – the same as when you were first learning to count high card points, it all falls into place and becomes fairly automatic.

This Handout shows raw LTC calculation. See Klinger for refinements.

Ron Klinger, 2011. *The Modern Losing Trick Count*. 2nd Edit. Modrn Bridge Publications: Sydney.

Ron Klinger, 2004. *Intermediate Master Bridge Series, Ron Klinger's Master Class*. Cassell: London.