

Stayman

[Back to Basics](#)

Description: *Stayman* is a **conventional** bid used to find a major fit after partner has made a natural NT (1st) bid, increasing the chances of achieving game with 25+ cHCP.

Rationale: A game contract in a major suit scores 20pts higher than a 3NT contract. Also, with 25chp and a major fit, the success rate is 65% versus 50% for a 3NT contract.

When to use: Its usages are;

- ❖ In response to partner's opening bids of 1NT and 2NT, or when partner has overcalled opponent's opening bid with 1NT.
- ❖ *It is not used following a NT response nor a NT re-bid*

Pre-requisites; Your hand should be balanced, though not 4-3-3-3, and must contain;

- ❖ **Four cards in one or both major suits**, and a weak side-suit that makes your hand less suitable for a NT response. *However, anticipate the contract will revert to NT if no major fit is determined.*
- ❖ Invitational or game strength.
- ❖ Combined hand strength does not exceed 27chcp, where 3NT is more likely to yield the same number of tricks as a major contract, scoring +10pts.

Partner's Bid	Invitational	Game
1NT (12-14)	11-12 hcp	13-18 hcp
2NT (20-22)	3-4 hcp	5-10 hcp
1NT Overcall (16-18)	7=8 hcp	9+ hcp

Invoke; *Stayman* is invoked by responding to partner's NT with an artificial ♣-suit, bid at the lowest level (e.g., 1NT > (NB) > 2♣ or 2NT > (NB) > 3♣). Partner announces; 'Stayman'

Partner's response: *Stayman* is a **forcing** bid and partner is mandated to re-bid as follows;

Bid	Criteria
♦-suit	With no 4-card major suit
♥-suit	With a 4+card ♥-suit, and a possible 4-card ♠-suit.
♠-suit	With a 4+card ♠-suit, denying a 4-card ♥-suit.
<i>Partner should not uplift their response</i>	

Your re-bid:

Re-bid	Criteria
NT at lowest level	With no match and invitational strength
3NT	With no match and game strength
Major at invite level	With major match and invitational strength
Major at game level.	With major match and game strength

This is
Promissory Stayman
Your re-bid &
contract is limited to
majors and NT.

Partner's follow up;

- ❖ Partner will take your game re-bid as sign-off.
- ❖ Over an invite (2NT or 3♥/♠), partner will raise to game when holding a maximum hcp in their hand, else decline the invite and NB.
- ❖ **Exception** (when partner is holding both majors). Partner can convert your 2NT or 3NT re-bid to the ♠-suit. *Opener can assume you have a 4-card ♠-suit (Promissory Stayman) as your bids have denied ♥-suit support* (e.g., 1NT >> 2♣ >> 2♥ >> 2NT >> 3/4♠)

Examples. West opens weak 1NT & North passes. Do you use Stayman?

Hand-1	Hand-2	Hand-3	Hand-4
♠ A 10 7 ♥ K J 5 4 (11) ♦ Q 8 2 ♣ J 9 3	♠ K J 5 4 ♥ K 9 4 (12) ♦ Q 5 ♣ Q J 8 2	♠ K Q J 4 ♥ A J 7 (14) ♦ 9 8 ♣ K 8 6 2	♠ A 7 3 ♥ A 7 6 4 (11) ♦ 8 5 2 ♣ K 4 3

Hand-1	Invitational hcp + 4-card major ~ but a 4-3-3-3 shape. Prefer [2NT] invite bid.
Hand-2	Invitational hcp. Bid [2♣] , targeting a ♠ ^{match} or NT ^{mismatch} contract
Hand-3	Do not be put off by the poor suit. Bid [2♣] , targeting a ♠ ^{match} or NT ^{mismatch} game contract
Hand-4	Your shape is 4-3-3-3 with lower invitational hcp, which suggests a 2NT invite, but it is also a poor hand (having no intermediary values). [PASS] . <i>You are playing the odds on making 7/8/9 tricks at (80%/50%/20%)</i>

Difficult hands. West opens weak 1NT & North passes. Do you use Stayman?

♠ A 10 7 4 2

♥ Q J

♦ K 8

♣ K 9 6 3

(13)

No

Game hcp and 5-card major

Partner is unlikely to have a 4-card match! Either bid [3♠] ~ *preference to play in suit, but able to play in 3NT if no 3-card support*, or pursue a 5-3 fit via the *Transfer convention* bid of [2♥], showing your 5+card ♠-suit

♠ A K 10 7

♥ K J 5

♦ Q 8

♣ Q J 9 3

(16)

No

Game+ hcp (28-30 chcp) and 4-card major

Your strength and shape will score better in 3NT with overtricks, rather than a major game with the same no. of tricks. Bid [3NT].

Intervention: If opponents interfere, your partnership must agree if ‘*systems are still on*’ or ‘*systems are now off.*’

Remember; A Stayman response to 1NT has used up the traditional [2♣] weak take-out response. Your partnership strategy must include an alternative approach to achieving a weak take-out in the ♣-suit.