

## Takeout doubles

### When is a double for takeout?

After the opponents have opened the bidding, a double is for 'take out' not penalty.

A double will be for take out when:

- The bidding is below game
- The doubler has not bid (other than pass)
- The opponents have bid a suit, not NT.

### What do you need to make a take out double?

There are three types of hands on which you can make a take out double:

- a 'normal takeout double' with an opening hand up to about 17TP
- a 'power double' with a strong hand of 18TP or more and a 5 card or longer suit
- a balanced hand, too strong to overcall 1NT.

#### 1. Doubling with a 'normal' opening hand

The requirements for a take double with an opening hand of less than 18TP are:

- an opening hand or better (you can count shortage points as you are likely to have a fit in one of your suits)
- no more than two cards in opener's suit
- at least three cards in the unbid suits.

You double tells partner to choose their best suit. With a minimum hand you plan to pass whatever your partner bids.

Do not double just because you have an opening hand. Do not double unless your hand is the right shape.

Your LHO opens 1D. Let's say you double with this hand.

**You**

K764

J2

AJ8

A864

**Auction**

(1D) x (2D) 2H ?

What do you bid now your partner has bid your short suit?

2NT? (there is no point in now bidding one of your 4 card suits). This would show a very strong hand and would mislead partner, who may bid again. Now you are in serious strife and will very likely get a poor score (particularly if vulnerable).

***Do not double with an off-shape hand unless you are strong enough to bid again***

If your hand is not the right shape for either an overcall or a take out double PASS!

However, the better your shape, the fewer HCP you need for a take out double

**You**

QJ94

KJ7

T63

KQ8

**Auction**

(1D) ?

You should pass on this hand. It is not the right shape for a double and is not suitable for an overcall

**You**

KT85

K964

6

A643

**Auction**

(1D) ?

Double for take out. This hand has fewer HCP points than the last hand but has a perfect shape for a take out double. It has a 4-4-4-1 shape with 4 cards in each of the unbid suits. Adding 3 points for the singleton is has 13 TP, enough for a take out double. You plan to pass whatever suit your partner chooses.

*What if I have a five-card suit?*

As a general rule, if your 5 card suit is a major you should overcall (although if your major suit is very poor you may choose to double if you have a very minimum hand) but if your 5 card suit is a minor you should double.

## **2. Doubling with a strong unbalanced hand**

With a minimum opening hand you double then pass partner's response.

With a strong hand you double then bid your own suit.

This shows a strong single-suited hand with at least 16+ HCP and a six-card suit (or more points and a good 5 card suit). It is not forcing and with a weak hand partner can pass.

## **3. Doubling with a strong balanced hand**

If your hand is balanced or semi balanced but too strong for a 1NT overcall (which would show 15-17 HCP and at least one stopper in the opponent's suit), you can double for take out then bid NT. This shows 18-19 HCP and is not forcing (if you want to game force partner you can double then cue bid the opponent's suit).

## Responding to a take out double (advancer)

If there is no intervening bid you must respond to partner's take out double, even if you have no HCP.

You may also be tempted to pass when you have the suit bid by your opponents. If you pass in this situation, partner's take out double becomes a penalty double. You can choose to convert the double into a penalty double by passing but you should have at least three sure trump tricks and an outside ace – a hand that looks like this when your opponents have opened 1H: A5, QJT972, 76, 843.

## Responding in a suit

If there is no intervening bid you are forced to respond to a take double. You should bid your best suit but give preference to a major suit over a longer minor.

You should also tell partner how strong your hand is by bidding your suit at the appropriate level.

Bid your suit at the cheapest level with a weak hand of less than 8 TP, jump in your suit with 9-10 TP and invite partner with 10-12 TP.

Where you have enough for game bid game (you should have a 5 card suit as partner may only have 3). If you have enough for game but are unsure where (for example, you only have a 4 card major) you can game force by cue bidding the opponent's suit: (1D) x (P) 2D.

Why do you have to jump in response to a take out double with a better than nothing hand?

Look at these two hands. Your partner doubles after the opponents open 1D:

8643	KJ85
864	864
9753	9643
93	KJ32

You cannot make the same bid on these hands. The second hand is much better than the first so tell your partner by bidding 1S on the first hand to show a very weak hand but you would bid 2S on the second hand to show a slightly better hand of 8-9/10 TP.

## Responding in no trumps

With 8 or more HCP you can respond in no trumps. This denies a four card major and promises at least one stopper in the opponent's suit.

With 8-/9/10 HCP bid no trumps at the cheapest level

With 10-11/12 HCP jump in no trumps

With 12/13 HCP bid 3NT.

***Don't bid 1NT with a weak hand, just bid your cheapest 3-card suit***

Here is a summary of the responses to a take out double:

Total points	Bid
0 - 7/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best suit at the cheapest level</li> </ul>
8/9 - 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best suit 1 level higher than necessary</li> <li>1NT with a stopper in opener's suit</li> </ul>
10/11 - 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best suit at the 3 level - invitational</li> <li>2NT - invitational</li> </ul>
12/13+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Game with a 5-card major (your partner may only have 3)</li> <li>Game in NT with no 4-card major and a stopper in opener's suit</li> <li>Cue bid opponent's suit at the cheapest level if no 5-card major and not sure where to play*. Game forcing. Asks partner for more information</li> </ul>

\* Some people play this as invitational or better

### What if there is an intervening bid?

The responses discussed above are predicated on there being no intervening bid after partner's take out double.

If responder bids your responses to partner's take out double change their meaning.

With a weak hand you should now pass.

With 8+ TP you can bid your suit at the cheapest level. This is called a 'free bid'. With a better hand you can jump in your suit.

You can game force by bidding the opponent's suit.

You can also use a 'responsive double'. For example: (1D) x (1S) x by you shows 4 spades and 3-4 clubs.

### What if responder raises opener's suit?

If you have sufficient values and want to compete but are unsure where (remember your partner may have a 3-card suit) you can double to ask partner to bid their best suit (a responsive double): (1D) x (2D) x by you.

### Doubler's rebid

With a minimum hand the doubler MUST pass.

Raising advancer's suit shows 16+ (not forcing): (1D) x (P) 1S (P) 2S.

Bidding a new suit shows a power double type hand – a strong 16+ single suiter (not forcing): (1D) x (2D) 2H (P) 2S.

A jump rebid is invitational and ask partner to bid game with anything other than nothing (not forcing): (1D) x (P) 1H (P) 3H.

A cue of the opener's suit is game forcing and shows a big hand that you want to play in game even if partner has only a few HCP.