

TIP OF THE WEEK: Balancing or Protecting

When the strength between the two sides is evenly divided, you should be reluctant to let the opponents choose trump at a low level when they're not interested in game. The fact that the opponents have stopped low implies that your partner has some values and couldn't make a descriptive bid in direct seat. Making a call, in the pass-out seat, is known as balancing or protecting.

Balancing defends less on high card points and more on shape. The weaker your hand, the more likely partner has a strong hand, but couldn't bid in second chair (i.e: no suit to overcall or no support for all the unbid suits).

Balancing Risks and Rewards

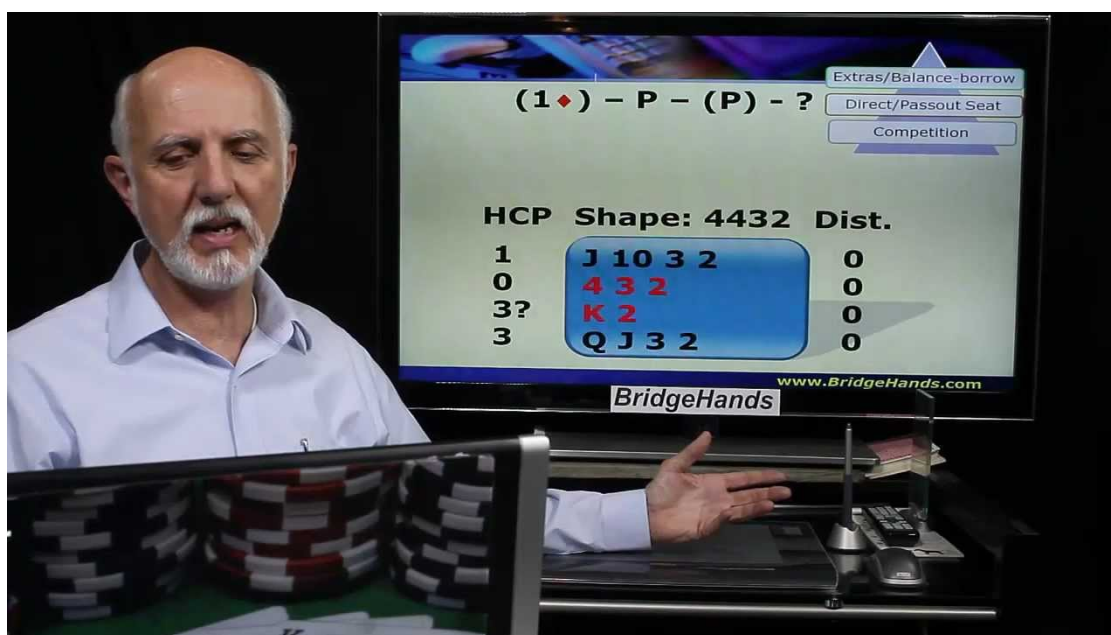
Balance if ...	Don't Balance if ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . you're short in the opponent's suit. . you have length and high-card strength in the other suits. . you have a good 5-card or longer suit . the HCP are divided between you and your partner and the opponents. . you're not vulnerable. . the opponents have bid and raised a set. . our side doesn't have enough defensive values to beat a game in the opponent's suit. . it will push the opponents to a level where we can set them. . we might go down less than if they make their contract. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . you are vulnerable. . you have less than 8 points and/or a weak suit. . your honor cards are in the opponent's suit. . they have a misfit, we probably won't have a fit. . the opponents can find a better contract. . if the suit was bid on your left and you have a strong holding in their suit. <p>Be aware of danger suits (1C) P (1NT) P Responder probably has longer clubs than any other suit.</p> <p>(1C) P (1H) P (1NT) Opener will not have 4 spades, but Responder might.</p> <p>(1D) P (1NT) P Responder will not have a 4-card Major, but Opener might.</p>

Balancing after A Suit Opening Bid

(1C/D/H/S) P (P) ?	Minimum Bid = 8 - 13 points, 5-card suit
	1NT = 11 - 14 points with stopper (Systems "on")
	Jump (new suit) = 13 - 16 points and strong 6+ suit

(1C/D/H/S) P (P) ?	Takeout Double = 10+ points, shortness in opponent's suit. A new suit or NT by you after partner's response shows a stronger hand (14+).
	(1H) P (P) ? Q873 84 T95 AKT5
	Cuebid = Michaels
(1H) P (2H) P (P) 2NT	2NT = Minors

Michael from Bridgehands.com



<https://youtu.be/HpvQ58K-fZo>

Larry Cohen



<https://youtu.be/9pdwnNTSE8Q>

Practice Hands

(Source: Irva K. Newhart)

1. (1♥) pass (pass) ? ---> ♠KJ43 ♥AJ6 ♦Q843 ♣Q3
13 hcp, reasonable heart stop, bid 1NT, systems on
2. (1♥) pass (pass) ? ---> ♠KJ5 ♥76 ♦Q108432 ♣Q3
8 hcp, pass (your diamonds are not strong enough to bid)
3. ((1♥) pass (pass) ? ---> ♠KQ5 ♥76 ♦AQJ1084 ♣A6
16 hcp, jump to 3♦, inviting game
4. (1♠) pass (pass) ? ---> ♠7 ♥A852 ♦KQ85 ♣J743
10 hcp, takeout double; partner may pass with 5-6 good spades

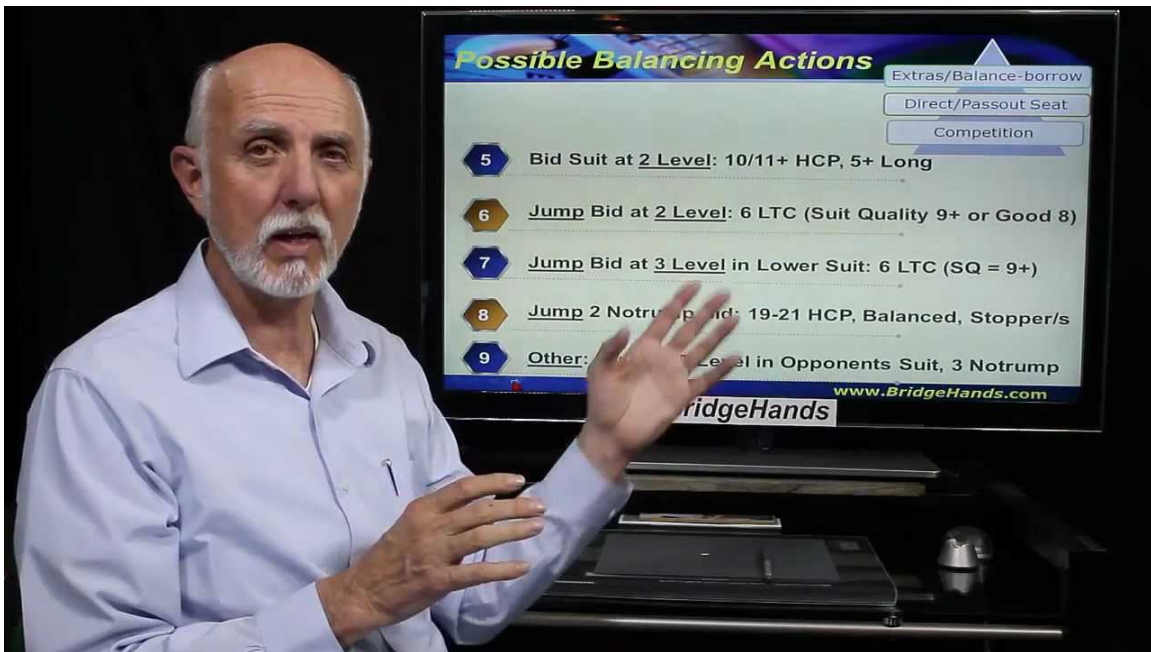
5. (1♦) pass (pass) ? ———> ♠QJ754 ♥A9532 ♦ void ♣Q108
9 hcp, 2♦ Michaels cue bid
6. (1♦) pass (pass) ? ———> ♠AJ1089 ♥932 ♦K8 ♣AKQ6
17 hcp, double, then bid spades to show a strong hand
7. (1♠) pass (pass) ? ———> ♠KQ64 ♥87 ♦Q9643 ♣AJ
12 hcp, pass, long suit too weak to bid; better to defend
8. (1♥) pass (2♥) pass
(pass) ? ———> ♠J9642 ♥765 ♦A109 ♣K6
8 hcp, 2♠; partner knows your spades were too weak to overcall on the first round
9. (1♥) pass (1NT) pass
(2♦) pass (pass) ? ———> ♠ Q1084 ♥K43 ♦94 ♣AQJ6
12 hcp, double for takeout (couldn't double 1st round w/o ♦ support)
10. (1♦) pass (pass) 1♥
(pass) ? ———> ♠A64 ♥8543 ♦K42 ♣873
7 hcp, pass, but bid 2♥ if LHO bids anything
11. (1♥) pass (pass) 1♠
(pass) ? ———> ♠62 ♥KJ1083 ♦AK6 ♣Q96
13 hcp, 2NT inviting game
12. (1♥) pass (pass) 1N
(pass) ? ———> ♠J106542 ♥64 ♦KQ7 ♣84
6 hcp, 2♥ (transfer to spades)

Responding to Partner's Balancing Bid (Subtract 3 points from your values)

Remember, your partner might have stretched to balance. The goal is to find a fit, not game.

- Free raise of their suit shows 8-12 pts
- *Competitive raise of partner's suit over an intervening bid*
 (1H) P (P) 1S
 (2H) 2S ----->
shows support, but may be made with a slightly weaker hand
- *Jump raise of partner's suit invites game (11-13 pts.)*
- *Cuebid with a strong hand and interest in game*
- *New suit shows a 5+ card suit and good playing strength 8+ points (no support for partner's suit)*
- *Don't jump respond to a takeout double without 12+ points*
- NT shows 8+ points and stoppers in opponents suit

Michael from Bridgeheads.com



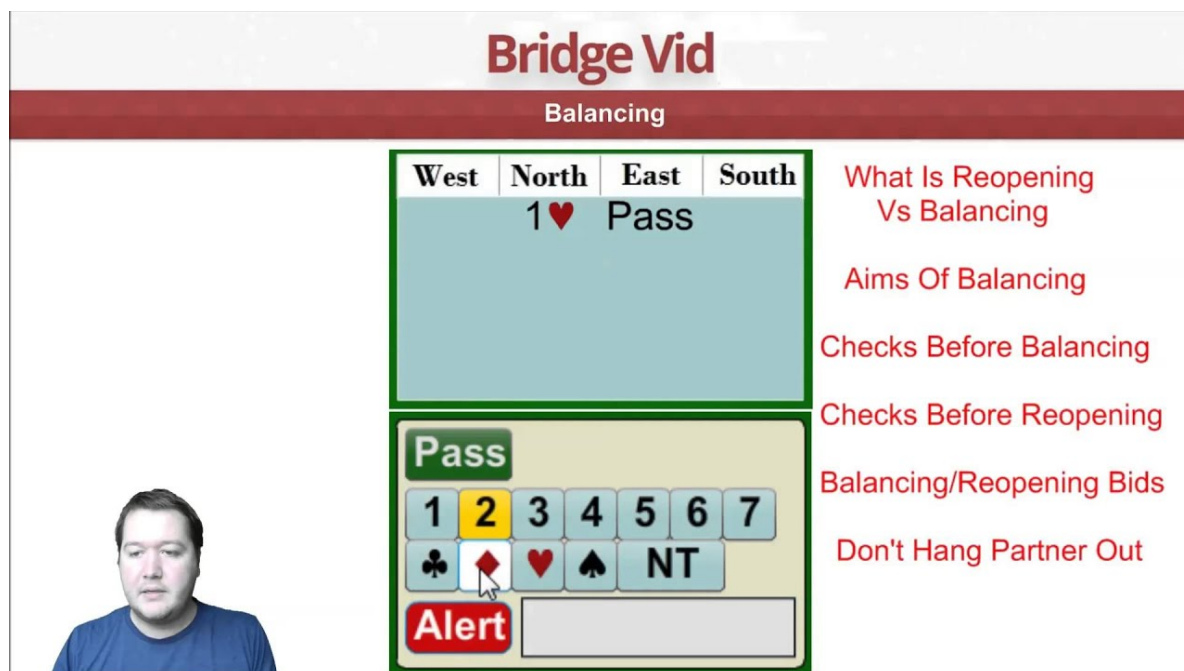
<https://youtu.be/NdjyxlJQVZU>

Click on the links below, to read articles by Larry Cohen and Barbara Seagrams

Balancing on the 1-level - Bridge Articles

THE BALANCING ACT - Barbara Seagram
https://www.barbaraseagram.com › balancing_2012

Peter Holland from Bridge Vid



The screenshot shows the Bridge Vid website interface. At the top, the title "Bridge Vid" is displayed in a large, bold, red font. Below it, the word "Balancing" is written in a smaller, black font. The main content area is divided into two columns. On the left, there is a video player showing a man (Peter Holland) in a blue shirt. On the right, there is a list of articles. The top article is "What Is Reopening Vs Balancing". Below it are "Aims Of Balancing", "Checks Before Balancing", "Checks Before Reopening", "Balancing/Reopening Bids", and "Don't Hang Partner Out".

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	

Pass

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT

Alert

- What Is Reopening Vs Balancing
- Aims Of Balancing
- Checks Before Balancing
- Checks Before Reopening
- Balancing/Reopening Bids
- Don't Hang Partner Out

<https://youtu.be/9pdwnNTSE8Q>