

Lesson 1 – Weak No Trump Opening bid and responses.

Opening 1NT – 12-14 Balanced

You must always check if you have a 1NT opener, before you open 1 of a suit.

A balanced hand contains:

- **no** void or singleton
- **one** doubleton at most
- **no good** 5-card major* (e.g. with a balanced 12-14 HCP and ♠J9875 open 1NT, but with a balanced 12-14 HCP and ♠AKJ72 open 1♠.)

There are only three types of balanced hand:

- 4333
- 4432
- 3325

1NT is a **limit bid**. Its shape and strength are known –limit bids are **not** forcing.

This means that the responder is usually in charge. Opener rarely bids again.

** Note: Acol experts / reference books differ on this. Some say ALWAYS open 1NT with any balanced 12-14 HCP hand. Others say that with a 5 card major ALWAYS open in the major. If the experts cannot agree then it can't matter much either way!*

RESPONDING TO AN OPENING BID OF 1NT

The most important thing is to decide whether or not you have enough points to make a game in a No Trumps (i.e. 3NT). Don't forget you get a bonus of 300/500 for bidding and making game. But if you don't have at least 25 points between you and your partner, then you want to keep the bidding as low as possible.

Responding to 1NT with a balanced hand and no 5 card suit (*not playing Stayman*)

Points	Bid	Category	Comments
0-10	Pass	Sign Off	You know your partnership has less than 25 points.
11-12	2NT	Limit/Invitational	Asks partner to rebid 3NT with 14 points, otherwise to pass.
13-18	3NT	Sign Off	You know your partnership has enough for game but not enough for slam (33+)

Responding To 1NT with an Unbalanced Hand (Or Balanced With A Five Card Suit)

When your longest suit is a **MAJOR** suit (*N.B. - **NOT** playing Jacoby Transfers*):

Points	Length of Suit	Bid	Category	Comments
0-10	5+	2♥ or 2♠	Sign Off	After opener's 1NT, with a weak hand and a 5+ card suit it is better to play in a suit contract (<i>not playing Jacoby Transfers</i>).
11-18	5	3♥ or 3♠	Forcing	Asks partner to rebid 3NT with 2 cards in the same suit, or 4♥/♠ with 3+ cards. Partner must not pass.
11-18	6+	4♥ or 4♠	Sign Off	You are guaranteed an 8 card fit so can bid game directly. You know your partnership has enough for game but not enough for slam (33+).

When your longest suit is a **MINOR** suit (*not playing Stayman or Transfer conventions*):

Points	Bid	Category	Comments
0-10	2♣/♦	Sign Off	After opener's 1NT, with a weak hand and a 5+ card suit it is better to play in trumps.
11-12	2NT	Limit/Invitational	Asks partner to rebid 3NT with 14 points, otherwise to pass. With a minor suit and a good hand it is better to play in NT.
13-18	3NT	Sign Off	You have enough for game but not enough for slam (33+). With a minor suit and a good hand it is better to play in NT.

OPENER'S REBID AFTER YOU HAVE OPENED 1NT

If you open 1NT (12-14 balanced), your next bid is easy... it is normally **PASS**'. Notice that almost all of the responses to 1NT are **Sign Off** bids. That means **DO NOT BID AGAIN**.

Here are the exceptions:

Opener's Rebid After Invitational Or Forcing Response		
1NT ?	2NT	Rebid 3NT with 14 points otherwise pass
1NT ?	3♥ or 3♠	Rebid 3NT with only two of partner's suit. Rebid 4♥ or 4♠ with three+ in partner's suit