

THE 'STAYMAN' CONVENTION

Used by a responder after a 1NT or 2NT opening bid, to ask if opener has a 4 card major.

AFTER 1NT OPENING BID

2♣ = Have you got a 4 card major partner?

Responses to 2♣ (Stayman) :

2♦ - No I don't have a 4 card major.

2♥ - I have 4 hearts and may have 4 spades.

2♠ - I have 4 spades but I don't have 4 hearts.

Typically Stayman is used on hands of 11+ points when responder has a four card major and game might be possible if there is a major suit fit.

Stayman can also be used on any hand of **zero to 28 points** when it would be useful to find out if partner has a 4 card major. There is only one condition: *you must be prepared for any reply from partner.*

(With a weak hand with long clubs, responder starts with 2♣ and over any reply bids 3♣. This is the only way to sign off in a part score in clubs.)

The following hands are suitable for bidding Stayman after 1NT.

a)

♠	Q J 9 3
♥	A K 7 5
♦	K 5
♣	J 7 5

b)

♠	Q 9 3
♥	A K 7 5
♦	K 5
♣	9 7 5 3

c)

♠	K Q 8 2
♥	Q 7 5
♦	6 3
♣	A K 6 2

a) If opener rebids a major, you bid game in the major. If opener rebids 2♦ you bid 3NT.

b) If opener rebids 2♥ you raise to 3♥, invitational. If opener rebids 2♦ or 2♠, you bid 2NT showing 11-12 points.

c) If opener rebids 2♠ you bid 4♠. If opener rebids 2♦ or 2♥, bid 3NT.

♠	K 7 5 3 2
♥	Q J 8 4
♦	8 3
♣	6 5

This hand is also suitable for Stayman although it has less than 11 points. If opener rebids 2♥ or 2♠ you can pass. If opener rebids 2♦ you can still sign off in 2♠ because you have five.

♠	K 8 6 2
♥	J
♦	K 9 7 3
♣	J 10 6 2

But you should not use Stayman with this hand. What will you do if partner bids 2♥? You can't bid 2♠ as it would promise five spades and you can't bid 2NT as it would promise 11-12 points!

WHEN BIDDING STAYMAN, ALWAYS THINK:

‘What will I do if partner responds 2♦ or 2♥ or 2♠?’

Should Opener Bid Again After Stayman?

When responder makes a second bid after Stayman, opener should work out what he knows about responder's hand and decide if another bid is required. Look at this bidding sequence. Why did responder bid Stayman and then bid 2NT after the 2♥ bid? He must have four spades and 11-12 points (and less than four hearts).

1NT	2♣
2♥	2NT
?	

♠	K Q J 3
♥	A 7 5 2
♦	A 8 2
♣	9 4

You are the opening bidder and this is your hand. You opened 1NT and replied 2♥ to the Stayman bid. You worked out that your partner's 2NT bid showed four spades and 11-12 points so with 14 points and four spades, you can bid 4♠.

AFTER 2NT OPENING BID

3♣ is Stayman. Same principles apply as Stayman after 1NT but opener has 20-22 points.

AFTER A 1NT OVERCALL

2♣ is Stayman. Same principles apply as Stayman after 1NT opening, but 1NT overcall is 16-18 points so adjust the responses by 4 points.