

# Stayman Convention (Intro)

## Simple Stayman.

If you and your partner have an 8 card fit in a major suit, it is nearly always better to play in a suit contract than in NT. The Stayman Convention (invented before 1930 by Samuel Stayman) is a method of finding a 4-4 major suit fit following an opening bid of 1NT.

When partner opens 1NT, a 2♣ response is artificial. It asks partner “have you got a 4 card major suit?” The replies are:

2♦	No I haven't
2♥	Yes, I have a 4 card ♥ suit (or 4 cards in both major suits) <sup>1</sup>
2♠	Yes, I have a 4 card ♠ suit.

Responder's use of this artificial 2♣ bid promises at least an invitational strength hand (8+)<sup>2</sup> **and at least one 4 card major suit.**

Responder continues by raising the suit if a fit has been found, or by bidding NT if a fit has not been found - these bids at an appropriate level, game or invitation.

When Responder rebids NT (indicating a fit has not been found), Opener knows responder has the 4 cards in the unbid major. Holding BOTH major suits, Opener knows there is a fit in the unbid major (since by using the Stayman convention, responder has promised a 4 card major). Opener should choose a contract with the so far unbid major suit as trumps.

## Examples of hands held by Responder when Partner opens 1NT (15-17):

♠QT75	1NT	2♣
♥KT85	2♦	2NT (invite game in NT)
♦K6		
♣632		

♠QT75	1NT	2♣
♥KT85	2♥	3♥ (invite game in ♥)
♦K6		
♣632		

♠QT75	1NT	2♣
♥K5	2♥	2NT (invite game in NT or ♠)
♦KT86		(opener has not denied ♠)
♣632		

♠AT75	1NT	2♣
♥KT85	2♦	3NT (game in NT)
♦K6		
♣632		

♠AT75	1NT	2♣
♥KT85	2♥	4♥ (game in ♥)
♦K6		
♣632		

♠AT75	1NT	2♣
♥KT	2♥	3NT (game in NT or ♠)
♦KT86		opener has not denied ♠)
♣632		

Responder has a weak hand (short in clubs) and can pass any reply to the artificial 2♣ bid.

♠T975	1NT	2♣!
♥T875	2anything	PASS
♦T9846		
♣-		

1. Holding both majors, which to bid first? Traditionally ♥, or the better one, but it actually doesn't matter. You will find the 8 card fit whichever major you bid first.

2. Responder can bid 2♣ Stayman on a weaker hand if prepared to pass any reply from the Opener.