

Responding to take-out doubles

1. The double of an opponent's suit bid at the 1-level is universally regarded as for take-out. A take-out double normally gives partner a choice of suits, and if not it is compensated by high card points.

Partner (the 'doubler') will normally hold

either a hand with 12-19 hcps, a *shortage in the opponent's suit* and 3 cards or more in each of the unbid suits. The classic hand is a void or singleton in the opponent's suit and 3 suits of at least 4 cards. Other hand types you might double on *in order of frequency* are

a strong no-trump hand with 18-20 hcps

two five-card suits 16-20 hcps

a very strong single suited hand with 8-9 playing tricks(rare)

2. When is a double for take-out?

If opponent bids a suit at the 1 level (*not no-trumps however*)

If opponents bid and support a suit (to the 3 level)

If opponents open at the 2/3 level in a suit (for *weak* two opening bids in majors, or a 3 level pre-empt, *double for take-out is by agreement*)

If partner has opened the bidding and been overcalled at the 1 or 2 levels (*the so-called negative double*)

Partnerships should discuss and agree any other situations where a double is for take-out.

Alerting. Doubles of natural suit bids at the 1 or 2 levels which are for take-out do not need to be alerted. However negative doubles should be alerted since only some players use this device

3. The basic guidelines for responding to a normal take-out double are:

1. You should always respond unless the next player bids *and* you have less than 5 hcps, or you hold 6 cards in the opponent's suit and a very weak hand.

2. Apart from the above conditions you still have always to respond even with a hand that contains 0 hcps.

3. Partner is looking for your best suit.

4. You may have to bid a 3-card suit if no 4-card suit is available for you

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to bid.

5. Only bid no-trumps if your only 4-card suit is the one opened, and then you should hold a definite guard in the bid suit (better than Qxx). Note that a 1 NT response does not indicate 6-9 hcps *in this case*, since it may be your only sensible bid.

6. You should bid a major suit in preference to a minor suit

7. You should jump in a suit (at least 4 cards) with 7+hcps if there is no intervening bid by opponents to raise the level too high

8. You can bid the opponents opening bid suit with a hand that wants to play at game level. This asks partner to 'choose' the suit. You are likely hold 2 biddable suits and at least 13 hcps.

9. You may respond at game level with either a no-trump hand with 2 guards in the opponents suit and 13-16 hcps, or with an unbid 6 card suit (usually a major suit) and enough hcps to open the bidding.

Hands for responding to partner's double of 1 spade

1. A very weak hand

S 93 H Q 765 D 10532 C 743 bid 2 hearts

2. A strong hand

S 98 H 97643 D AK7 C AKQ bid 3 hearts

3. A 'pass' hand

S KQJ764 H K7 D Void C 8643 pass!

4. A flat hand

S Q1092 H K84 D QJ2 C J109 bid 2NT

5. The 'impossible' hand

S 9654 H 876 D 742 C 865 bid 2 clubs

6. A hand with options

S 63 H AK3 D A987 C KQ72 bid 2 spades

4. Responding to a 'negative' double is rather different

Here you have opened and the 'doubler' (your partner) needs around 9 or more hcp to double so your combined strength can reasonably be ascertained

1. The double may be left in for penalties
2. Since a 'negative' double frequently shows the other 2 suits, then bid your better 'other' suit. Always bid a major suit if available. Otherwise rebid your opening bid with 5 cards.
3. Bid no-trumps with good guards in opponents' overcall suit.

5. Developing the bidding further after partner has responded to your take-out double

Remember that partner has been 'forced' to bid so need not have the normal requirements for *that response*.

Raising partner's suit needs a 'doubling' hand better than normal.

Changing suits shows a strong 2 suited hand

Bid 2 no-trumps with the balanced 19-20 hcp hand with guards in opponent's bid suit (2 guards are desirable)

Bid the opponent's suit to get further information from partner. This bid *must be alerted, and is forcing*

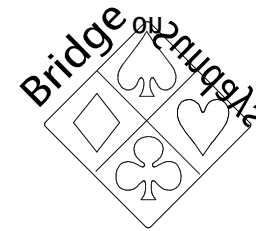
6. After a penalty double of 1 no-trump

After an opening bid of 1 NT; a response of 1 NT (6-9 hcp); or a rebid of 1NT (15-17) doubles are for penalties and show that your side is likely to hold the balance of strength. Bids by doubler's partner are escapes.

Show support for any suit by partner by raising in the normal way

A new suit is a 'weakness take-out', 5 cards or more, not wanting to leave the double in.

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Doubles- how to respond