

Forcing 1NT

Forcing 1NT is an important part of the 2/1 Game Force system.

Playing 2/1 GF, a 2-level response to partner's opening bid of 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠ promises an opening hand or better and is forcing to game. So what does responder do with those pesky hands of 10-12 HCPs that are too good -- or too unbalanced -- for a typical 5-9 1NT, but not strong enough to force to game? They play a forcing 1NT! The forcing 1NT is alertable, and **opener cannot pass it!**

Note: The 1NT bid after partner opens 1♦, 1♥, or 1♠ is only forcing if responder has not already passed. A passed hand cannot force to game.

After opener (in first or second seat) bids 1♦, 1♥ or 1♠ and RHO passes:

Responder's priorities with 5-12 HCPs are

1. a natural raise of a major suit bid with 3-card support and 8-9 HCPs
2. a 1-level response of a 4+ card major, if possible (i.e. a 1♥ or 1♠ response to 1♦ or a 1♣ response to partner's 1♥)
3. forcing 1NT with
 - 5-12 HCPs, no 3-card support for partner's major, and no 4-card suit biddable at the 1-level
 - 10-11 points and at least 3-card support for partner's major suit open
 - 5-7 HCPs and at least 3-card support for partner's major suit open

1NT force is off if

- Partner's opening bid is doubled or overcalled by opponents. In that case, a 1NT response is natural, showing 6-10 HCPs. If RHO doubles, responder can redouble with 11-12 balanced points.
- Responder's 1NT is doubled. Opener can make a natural rebid, redouble to show extra strength, or pass with nothing more to say.

Opener's priorities for a second bid after partner's forcing 1NT response are

With 12-15 points:

- Rebid a 6-card or longer major at the 2 level
- Bid 2♥ (if you opened 1♠ and hold a 4-card or longer heart suit)
- Bid 2 of your longer minor (promises only 3+ cards in the suit)

With 16-18 points:

- Rebid three of a 6-card or longer major (invitational to game)
- Raise to 2NT with a balanced 17-18 HCPs (invitational to game)
- Bid 2♠ if you opened 1♥ and hold a 4-card spade suit (forcing)
- Bid 3 of a 5-card minor
- Bid 2 of a 3- or 4-card minor (not forcing)

With 18 + points

- Raise to 3NT if your hand is balanced
- Bid 2♠ if you opened 1♥ and hold a 4-card spade suit (forcing)
- Make a strong jump-shift to 3 of a new 4-card or better suit (forcing)

Responder's priorities for a second bid (if opener indicates a minimum opening)

With 5-9 points

- Bid partner's first-bid suit at the two level with two cards in that suit and no strong preference for partner's second suit
- Pass with a strong preference for partner's second bid suit (4+ cards in a minor; 3+ cards in a major)
- Bid your own suit (6+-cards) at the 2 level with no interest in either of partner's suits

With 10-11 points

- Bid 2NT with stoppers in the unbid suits and no fit for partner's major
- Jump in partner's major with 3-card or better support
- Jump in partner's major rebid (showing a 6-card suit) with 2-card support
- Raise partner's minor rebid with 5+ card support and unbalanced distribution
- Jump in a new suit with a strong 6-card or longer suit of your own
- Bid 3NT or 4 of partner's major with a maximum response (11 points) that has been revalued because of the bidding

Quick Quiz

Playing 2/1 GF and 1NT Force, what would you bid after partner's 1♥ open?

♠ Q52

♠ KJ98

♠ 952

♥ 93

♥ 5

♥ A

♦ A43

♦ 532

♦ 64

♣ J9876

♣ AK942

♣ KQ109872

After your initial 1NT response, what would you bid after opener's 2♦ rebid?

♠ Q52

♠ KJ98

♠ 952

♥ 93

♥ 5

♥ A

♦ A43

♦ 532

♦ 64

♣ J9876

♣ AK942

♣ KQ109872