

Cardiff Bridge Tutors

How to Overcall.

West	North	East	South
1♣	2♥		



Why Overcall?

There are a number of reasons to overcall.

You may be competitive, obstructive or informative.

- **Competitive.**
 - You may be competing based on HCP
 - You may be sacrificing with a long suit with opportunities to ruff
- **Obstructive.**
 - You may be taking up bidding space by forcing the opponents to bid at a higher level
- **Instructive.**
 - You may tell your partner the suit that you would like led

What should I consider if I am thinking of making an overcall?

You always need **good suit quality**, a strong suit and that means at least two honours.

You need to consider **Vulnerability**. If you are vulnerable your overcall needs greater strength.

Remember!

Suit Quality

- at least two honours

Suit length

- Five of six of a suit

Points

A minimum of 8 for a 1 level call

11 or a good six card suit for a 2 level overcall

Remember!

Never overcall with a suit which will be embarrassing when your partner leads it!

Competing.

Just because the opponents open it doesn't necessarily mean that it is their contract. Your partnership may have more points or a very distributional hand! It would be right to overcall the opposition's opening bid if the circumstances were right.

What types of overcall might be made?

- **Suit overcalls over a suit opening bid.**

With **8-10 HCP** and a good quality suit then overcall at the **one level**.

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥		

8-10 HCP
Two honours in a
five card ♥ suit
An 8 loser hand.

With **11+ HCP** and a good quality suit then overcall at the **two level**.

West	North	East	South
1♣	2♥		

11+ HCP
Two honours in a
five card ♥ suit
A 7 loser hand.

Remember.
Bid to the maximum that you can.
If you can overcall at the two level then don't bid at the one level to be "safe".

- **Suit overcalls over NT**

With 11+ HCP and a good quality suit then overcall at the two level.

West	North	East	South
1NT	2♥		

11+ HCP
Two honours in a
five card ♥ suit
A 7 loser hand.

- **NT overcalls**

Whilst you may open 1NT with 12-14 HCP **you need 16+ HCP (and a balanced hand) to overcall a suit with 1NT.**

With 11+ HCP and a good quality suit then overcall at the two level.

West	North	East	South
1♣	1NT		



Q. Why do you need 16+ points when you can open with 12-14?

A. When you open 1NT you can assume that the remaining points are equally spread and so with 28 points shared between the other three then you might expect your partner to have 9. In this case your partnership would have the majority of points and your pre-emptive 1NT might succeed.

West	North	East	South
1♠			
12-14	28-26 points to share 9 each East/West might have 21+		



Once the opposition have opened then at least 12 points are held by opener and if you overcall with 12-14 HCP then there can only be 16 points to be shared by the other two. Now the points are even and your 1NT isn't a sound move.

West	North	East	South
1♣	1NT		
12+	12-14	<16 points to share < 8 each	



If you have 16 points and overcall 1NT then the balance swings back in your favour. Opener has an assumed 12 plus your 16 and now there are 12 points to be shared by the other two players. With an assumed 22 points for your partnership the 1NT looks good again.

West	North	East	South
1♣	1NT		
12+	16+	12 points to share 6 each North/South may have 22+	



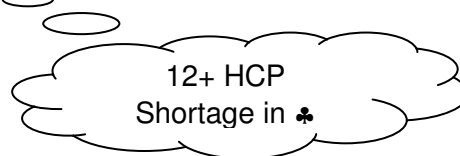
- **Doubles**

Modern Acol teaches that a double of the opposition's opening bid is a Takeout double it is not for penalties.

The double should mean:

- Enough points to open
- A shortage in the opponent's bid suit.
- Ability to support any suit that your partner bids.

West	North	East	South
1♣	X		



North's double is asking South to show their best suit.

Obstructing.

Overcalls take up bidding space and make life difficult for your opponents especially if their opening bid was a minor suit and you can overcall with a major!

This is particularly good where you are not vulnerable and the opposition are.

West	North	East	South
1♣	2♠		



Now East has to enter the bidding at the three level and may be reluctant to do so. West may have 19 points and North 11 so would you want to bid 3♥ with 5 points and a four card major?

But remember!

Never overcall with a suit which will be embarrassing when your partner leads it!

Informing.

Overcalls inform your partner of the suit that you would like to have led.

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	2 ♣	4 ♥	All Pass

This is the reason that you should not overcall a suit which will be embarrassing when your partner leads it.

You are promising two of the top three honours!

Responding to Partner's overcall.

It is important to compete as strongly as you possibly can so now read the How to Respond to an Overcall booklet!