

EIGHT IS ENOUGH!

Eight bad habits that are ruining your bridge

(not presented in rank order)

1) **Relying too much on gadgets**

If you substitute Losing Trick Count, Rule of 17, Rule of 20, etc. for thinking about each hand on a case-by-case basis, you will never be a very good player.

2) **Playing “stolen bid” doubles after the opponents overcall your 1NT opening**

The only proper use of this method is substituting double for Stayman if the opponents overcall 2♣; otherwise, it is essential that doubles be negative.

3) **Unsound overcalls when vulnerable**

Vulnerable overcalls at the two level or higher must be good suits and generally full opening values; non-vulnerable you may stretch a little.

4) **Off-shape minimum takeout doubles**

You must have 3+ card support for all unbid suits unless you have a “power double” hand type (e.g. a one-suited hand with 18+ hcp).

5) **Gerber**

As Larry Cohen says, “Gerber is not a convention, it’s baby food.” Enough said.

6) **Unnecessary jumps in game forcing auctions**

Take your time and save your bidding space. Unless a jump bid carries a very specific meaning (e.g. splinter) don’t do it – you could make further bidding difficult for your partner.

7) **Competing too high with balanced hands**

Have you heard the phrase, “bidding the same values twice” before? Once you have shown your hand, keep your mouth shut and let partner make the next decision. Balanced hands are defensive; distributional hands are offensive.

8) **Leading “top of nothing” against suit contracts**

Top of nothing leads are EXCLUSIVELY for no trump. The lead of a big spot card against a suit contract implies shortness.