

The Jacoby 2NT convention is used primarily in 5 card major systems when partner has opened 1♥/♠. Traditionally a 2NT bid is a balanced 11-12, but this can always be bid after first bidding something else and so the direct 2NT bid is free as a conventional bid.

The Jacoby 2NT bid promises 4 card support for partner's major and shows an opening hand or better (but see the note at the bottom of the page) with no upper limit, asking partner to describe his hand further. There are various versions of responses to this artificial 2NT bid, probably the best (and most popular) is :-

After 1♥ - 2NT

3♣ = ♣ shortage  
 3♦ = ♦ shortage  
 3♥ = good hand with no shortage  
 3♠ = ♠ shortage  
 3NT = average hand with no shortage  
 4♣ = a 5 card ♣ suit  
 4♦ = a 5 card ♦ suit  
 4♥ = poor hand with no shortage  
 (fast arrival)

After 1♠ - 2NT

3♣ = ♣ shortage  
 3♦ = ♦ shortage  
 3♥ = ♥ shortage  
 3♠ = good hand with no shortage  
 3NT = average hand with no shortage  
 4♣ = a 5 card ♣ suit  
 4♦ = a 5 card ♦ suit  
 4♥ = a 5 card ♥ suit  
 4♠ = poor hand with no shortage  
 (fast arrival)

All subsequent bids are game forcing, a suit bid being a cue bid. A shortage bid may be a singleton or void. A subsequent cue bid of a shortage suit would show a void. A good 5 card 2<sup>nd</sup> suit is bid in preference to showing a singleton.

Note: This is the most common form of Jacoby 2NT but there is a problem in that opener's response (when showing shortage) is the same whether he has a very weak opener or a powerful hand. With Jacoby 2NT responder is the captain and needs to know if partner is strong or not. There are various (rather complex) relay schemes but the best solution is for responder not to use Jacoby 2NT with just a moderate hand (in the 12-15 point range) but to use Key Card Swiss instead to describe his hand to opener. Thus, when using Jacoby 2NT responder has a big hand and is generally looking for slam and being captain is fine.

So it's best to use Jacoby 2NT on stronger hands, where there is a much greater probability of slam and with the weaker hands (12-15 pts) we use Key Card Swiss. Thus, with a balanced responding hand with 4+ trumps and 12+ pts we have: -

12-15 pts - Key Card Swiss  
 16+ pts - Jacoby 2NT

There are various other ways to raise partner's 1♥/♠ opening to game or better (Keycard Swiss, splinters etc) and they are described in the "Raising Partner's Major with a big hand" document.