BRIDGE TIPS FOR ANYONE

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Do I open this hand?

Open all 12 hcp hands

Open 11 hcp hands in 3rd chair

Open "Rule of 15" hands in 4th chair
   Rule of 15: add your hcp to the length of your spades and if it totals 15, open the hand.

Can I open hands with less than 12 hcp in 1st or 2nd chair? Yes, use the "Rule of 20"
   Rule of 20: add your hcp to the total length of your 2 longest suits; if it totals 20 open the hand
      Example 1: AJxxx xx KQJx xx   This is a good "rule of 20" hand since all the hcp's are in the long suits
      Example 2: Jxxxx Ax Jxxx KQ   This is a poor "rule of 20" hand since the long suits have no hcp strength.
                                    Pass this hand in 1st or 2nd chair.

TIPS

Honors in combination are *good*; scattered honors *not so good.*

We have learned to use Stayman opposite partner's 1NT opening if we have 8 hcp. But it should be a "good" 8 hcp, not a "bad" 8 hcp.
      Example 1: QJx Txxx KQxxx x   This is a good 8 hcp since you have all "honors in combination"
                                          and good honors heading a long suit. You also have ruffing values.
      Example 2: Qxx Axxx Jxx Jxx   No honors in combination and even with a 4 card major, it is
                                           totally square* and has no ruffing value. Just PASS partner's 1NT
*You can subtract a point if totally square so this is actually worth less than 8. Also, you <u>may</u> open a totally square 18 hcp hand 1NT. Length matters.

A's and K's are excellent at suit contracts; Q's and J's …. not so much.

All honors are good at NT contracts, especially honors in combination heading long suits.
      Example: Partner opens 1NT. What's your call with: xx Axx xx KQTxxx? 3NT. This is worth
                      more than the apparent 9 hcp.

At NT contracts, consider the value of 10's when deciding whether to make the next bid or pass. You may value 10's as ½ hcp each. NOTE: 1NT opening hands still need 15-17 hcp in normal honors.

Here are the NT hcp ranges:
11-14 Open 1 of a suit and to partner's 1 level response, rebid 1NT.
15-17 Open 1NT (or totally sq 18 counts can open 1NT)
18-19 Open 1 of a suit and to partner's 1 level response, jump to 2NT
20-21 Open 2NT
22-23 Open 2C and over partner's response, bid 2NT
24-25 Open 2C and over partner's response, jump to 3NT
26+   Open 3NT