Stayman - Summary Sheet

Partner opened 1NT

You are now 'in control of the auction'. It is up to you to decide how high you wish to go, and in what strain.
Frequently a suit contract will play better than a notrump contract – opponents will not be able to 'run' a weak suit against you, and you will be able to make an extra trick (by trumping a loser).
'Better' contracts will usually be in a major suit based on an 8-card fit or better.

The Stayman Convention

So how do you find this fit?
If you have one or two 4-card major suits you might have an 8-card fit.
Investigate the possibility by asking partner if he has one or more 4-card majors.
Bid 2♣, asking partner to bid 2♥ with 4 Hearts (might also have 4 spades), 2♠ with 4 spades and not 4 hearts, and 2♦ otherwise.

How strong?

Usually, you will have 11 or more points before making a Stayman bid.
This will be enough for you to rebid 2NT (or higher) if partner makes a 2♦ response.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	K T 4 3 Q 7 4 A K 5 3 6 5	Partner opened 1NT. Balanced hand with 12 points, 4 spades, and weak clubs. Bid 2♣. If partner bids 2♠ you will raise invitationally to 3♠ – must be better than 2NT. If partner bids anything else then rebid 2NT (natural and invitational).

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	K T 4 3 Q 7 6 4 A 5 3 6 5	Partner opened 1NT. Balanced hand with 9 points, 4 hearts and 4 spades. Pass. You would love to ask for 4-card majors, but you have nowhere to go if partner responds 2♦.

The weak options

Just occasionally a Stayman bid will be the right option on a hand of less than 11 points.
The most common situation will be when you hold 5-4 in the majors but less than 11 points (could be as weak as 0 points)
Bid 2♣. If partner responds in a major then pass with at least an 8-card fit.
If partner rebids 2♦ then rebid your 5-card major – natural, weak, and to play.

♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	K T 8 7 3 J T 6 4 6 3 5 4	Partner opened 1NT. Bid 2♣. If partner responds in a major then pass – it must be better than 1NT. If partner responds 2♦ then sign off with 2♠..

Stayman or transfers?

With one or two 4-card majors **ask** partner with a Stayman bid.
With a 5-card (or longer) major **tell** partner with a transfer bid.

Stayman over 2NT

3♣ is usually used opposite 2NT (and over sequences such as 2♣, 2♦, 2NT) in a similar manner, except that there are no weak sequences at this level.

Extended sequences

Experienced partnership may well play further extended sequences to show a variety of hand-types, but the above covers the basic uses of the convention.