

How to Qualify for Social Security Disability Benefits

If you have a medical condition, either mental or physical, that is so severe it makes it impossible for you to work you can file a claim for Social Security disability benefits. Disability benefits can give you the money that you need to pay for necessary living expenses like housing while you are sick and can't work. Anyone can file a claim for disability benefits. The only criteria that you have to meet in order to file a claim is that you expect that your condition will prevent you from working for a least a year. But, in order for your claim to be approved you will need to medically qualify for disability benefits.

Medically Qualifying for Disability Benefits

There are hundreds of different medical conditions that will qualify you to receive [disability benefits](#). The Social Security Administration lists them all in the Blue Book, along with the requirements that you must meet in order to qualify for benefits what that condition. No matter your illness or condition is you will have to provide plenty of medical evidence to back up your claim. You will need to have documentation of your condition like a doctor's diagnosis, MRI or PET scans, X-rays, and other medical evidence. You also can have doctors, caseworkers, social workers, former employers, and other people write statements on your behalf. The documentation that you submit should prove that you meet the requirements for that condition's listing in the Blue Book.

For example, if you have [arthritis](#) so badly that you can't work in order to qualify for disability benefits you would need to prove that you meet one of these requirements:

- There is persistent inflammation or deformity of your major joints,
- There is inflammation or deformity of your joints along with organ systems,
- There is an inflammation or deformity of the spine and/or its surrounding organs, or
- There are repeated manifestations of inflammatory arthritis which limit your movement, social functioning, and daily life.

You could submit X-rays, MRI scans, and documentation from doctors and physical therapists to prove that the arthritis meets one of those conditions. If you can't meet the listed requirements in the [Blue Book](#) but you also can't work because of your condition you might qualify for a Medical Vocational Allowance.

Another example is Early onset Alzheimer's. To meet the listing requirement, you will need to show that you have experienced a significant decline in at least one of these areas:

- learning and remembering (short-term memory in particular)
- using language (inability to recall words, misuse of words)
- paying attention to tasks or listening to others
- planning and judgment
- social cognition (ability to know proper social behavior in differing circumstances), or
- physical coordination.

Also, you need to show that you have an extreme limitation in one of these areas or a severe limitation in two of these areas:

- understanding, remembering, or using information (ability to understand instructions, learn new things, apply new knowledge to tasks)
- concentrating on tasks and completing tasks at a reasonable speed
- adapting or managing oneself (making plans for oneself independently of others; being aware of normal hazards and taking appropriate precautions, having practical personal skills), and
- interacting with others (with socially acceptable behavior).

Medical evidence can be anything from a diagnosis to statements about your decline written by family, friends, or old employers and co-workers.

Start A Claim Today

Processing a claim for disability benefits can take some time so it's better not to wait to [start your claim](#). You can file your claim online, or you can make an appointment at your local SSA office. If you go to your local office to file your claim remember that you need to bring copies of all of your medical documentation with you so that they can be submitted to the SSA with your claim.

Resources:

Qualifying: https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/disability_determination.shtml

Arthritis: <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/blue-book/rheumatoid-arthritis>

Blue Book: <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/AdultListings.htm>

Medical Vocational Allowance: <https://www.disabilitybenefitscenter.org/glossary/medical-vocational-allowance>

Start a Claim: <https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/rib>