

Six Important Tips for Winning Your Social Security Disability Claim

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1. Begin NOW!

Don't wait until your financial resources become tight. **Success in your claim is based only on your disability**, not on how much money you have in the bank. Applications can take over a year to process, and up to two years if you need to request a hearing or appeal an unfavorable decision from the Social Security Administration. You do not have to deplete all of your assets in order to receive Social Security disability. You can receive benefits from multiple sources at the same time without affecting your Social Security Disability claim.

2. Strongly consider hiring an attorney.

Living with a disability in itself is overwhelming; trying to navigate a Social Security claim alone is unnecessary and usually not cost effective. The better organized your claim is, the better your chances of a quick and favorable decision. Being represented by an attorney from the beginning will reduce your stress level and will increase your chances of winning the highest possible award at the earliest possible date.

By law, all attorneys' fees are subject to approval by the Social Security Administration. Many attorneys charge the same fee for all work up to the first hearing, **no matter when they get involved**: 25% of any back due benefits.

A good disability attorney will:

- patiently answer all of your questions,
- help you fill out your paperwork, and
- appear with you at a hearing.

An excellent disability attorney will **ALSO**:

- file your initial application for you electronically,
- help you from day 1 in organizing your case,
- collect a complete and accurate medical record for your claim,
- request additional information from your physicians, and
- aggressively follow up to make sure that your claim is processed quickly and fairly.

Hire an attorney now—avoid making mistakes and eliminate the unnecessary stress of trying to handle your claim by yourself.

3. Keep careful records of your condition.

Dedicate a notebook/journal to your disability. Record of all your medical appointments, and keep all of your medical receipts. Document all of the medical treatments you have undergone and medications you have been prescribed—and note how successful each has been. If you have chronic pain, keep a diary.

4. Document all of your disabling symptoms and conditions.

Every symptom, physical or psychological, may be relevant to your claim. Many medical disabilities result in psychological strain, and often there are powerful emotional and psychological components to disabling illnesses. If you have been diagnosed with depression or anxiety, or if you are undergoing any type of mental stress or pressure following your disability, document your mental state in your disability notebook/journal.

5. Involve your doctor.

You will need copies of all relevant medical records, which your physician's office should provide. For a successful claim, your doctor should provide you with a letter detailing how your medical conditions limit your ability to return to work and to do everyday activities. Many doctors are reluctant to involve themselves with the paperwork you require for a successful claim, but if you have an attorney, he or she should make sure that your medical records are clear and complete. **The information your doctor provides will have a huge impact on your claim.**

6. DON'T GIVE UP!

We believe that **the initial claim denial is actually meant to discourage you from appealing your claim**. Over 60% of all claims are denied at the initial claim level. **If you are denied benefits, appeal and keep appealing.** Find an excellent attorney who will aggressively pursue your case.

Provided as an educational service by Insler & Hermann, LLP. If you have any questions about a Social Security Disability claim, or if you are planning to file a claim and want to avoid making any mistakes, you are invited to call or email us. We will be glad to speak with you without cost or obligation.

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