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## How Do Mental Limitations Affect Your Ability to Work?

Physical impairments can negatively affect your cognitive abilities such as memory retention, speech, and reading comprehension. The medical condition may also cause chronic pain, anxiety, depression, and makes it harder to cope with stress. When you suffer from serious mental limitations, it becomes very challenging to successfully complete work-related duties.



Proving that the severity of your condition prevents you from working is a requirement for obtaining Social Security disability benefits. You should provide the judge or claims examiner with detailed information regarding your mental limitations and how they impede your ability to perform certain activities, such as the following:

1. Difficulties with focusing on a task for an extended period of time,
2. Making decisions
3. Communicating with others
4. Meeting strict deadlines
5. Safely using equipment

When you have medical records that substantiate your condition and limitations, it will improve your chances of getting approved for disability benefits.

## How Does the Administrative Law Judge Decide if You are Disabled?

An administrative law judge needs to determine if you are incapable of working based on the evidence and testimony presented during the Social Security disability hearing, and that your medical condition prevents you from performing work-related activities at jobs you've previously had. In order to be considered "disabled," you also need to show that you are unable to complete duties required at other jobs that you may be qualified for based on your age, work experience, and education. The judge will evaluate:



1. The treating physician's opinion and other medical evidence
2. Your physical or mental limitations and how they affect your ability to perform specific work-related tasks are assessed
3. The testimony of vocational and medical experts

If you are able to build a strong case and effectively communicate the limitations caused by your medical condition, it will improve the chances of achieving a favorable outcome.

## Who Will Attend My Administrative Law Judge Hearing?

While not open to the public, several people may be present during the proceeding. These include the administrative law judge, the judge's assistant, witnesses, and your attorney (if you choose to have a legal representative). Your relatives and friends may be able to attend, but only at the discretion of the administrative law judge.



Witnesses are often medical and vocational experts who can provide additional information regarding your medical condition and the ability to work. Some judges allow the witnesses to stay in the hearing room during your testimony, while others will only permit the witnesses to be present during their own testimony. If you prefer a witness to leave the hearing room while you testify, a judge could accommodate that request. Your attorney can let you know who is scheduled to appear at the hearing in advance.

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