



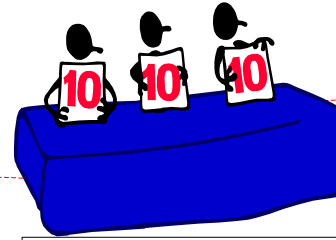
STEP 1
Is the claimant engaged in “substantial gainful activity?”

Substantial gainful activity (SGA) is determined by Social Security, which sets the maximum amount of earnings and gifts for SSDI and SSI. If the claimant does not or will not engage in SGA for 12 consecutive months, then proceed to Step 2.



STEP 2
Does the claimant suffer from any “severe” impairments?”

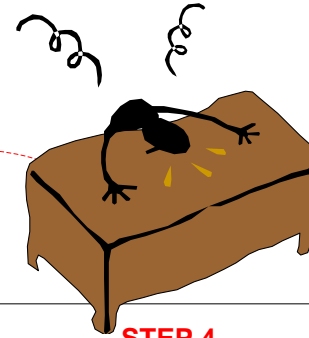
Does the medical evidence show that the claimant’s impairments more than minimally limit or restrict their physical or mental abilities to do basic work. If the impairments are not “severe,” then the claimant is not disabled. If the impairments are “severe,” then proceed to Step 3.



STEP 3
Do any of the claimant’s impairments meet or equal a “Listing?”

Social Security provides a “Listing of Impairments” that sets forth the criteria for determining whether an individual is disabled. It is very difficult to meet or equal Social Security’s Listing requirements. There are Listings for both physical and mental conditions. If you satisfy the requirements in a Listing you are found to “meet” the Listing.

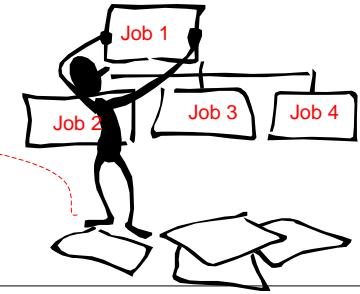
If the claimant meets or equals then the claimant is disabled. If not, proceed to Step 4.



STEP 4
Does the claimant retain the functional capacity to perform his/her past relevant work (i.e. work performed at SGA level for the past 15 years)?

At this stage the claimant must show that they cannot perform any of their past jobs done within the last 15 years on a competitive basis. Social Security uses the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) to classify jobs.

If you have a hearing in front of an ALJ, the ALJ may request a vocational expert (VE) to testify on employment related issues. The judge will apply the medical records, claimant’s testimony, and the medical expert’s testimony to determine whether the claimant can perform past relevant work. If the claimant can perform past relevant, the claimant is not disabled. If not, then proceed to Step 5.



STEP 5
Are there any jobs existing in significant numbers in the national or regional economy which the claimant can perform?

Finally, the claimant must show that there are not any jobs in the national or regional economy that they can perform. If there are no jobs that can be performed, then the claimant is disabled. If there are jobs that could be performed, then claimant is not disabled.