

Qualifying for Social Security Disability Benefits With a TBI

If you have experienced a TBI, you might be eligible for Social Security disability benefits. [The Social Security Administration \(SSA\)](#) offers monthly financial aid for people who will be out of work for at least one year due to a serious illness or injury. TBIs may not always qualify, but thousands of people are able to receive assistance while in rehab or receiving physical therapy.

Three Months and TBIs

It's important to note that while the SSA does identify TBIs as potentially qualifying conditions, it won't consider your claim until three full months have passed since your injury occurred. The SSA needs [medical evidence](#) proving that you've undergone therapies that have proved unsuccessful before evaluating and potentially approving your claim.

This means that if your injury was recent, you should hold off on applying for Social Security benefits, regardless of your ability to work.

Medically Qualifying

Once three months have passed you'll be able to determine if you medically qualify for disability benefits. The SSA maintains its own list of qualifying criteria used to evaluate applicants online. Hundreds of conditions are listed, plus the test results or symptoms you'll need to be approved.

TBIs weren't listed until 2016—previous you'd need to qualify by “meeting” another condition's symptoms, but now TBIs have their [own listing](#). If you have a TBI, you can qualify if you can meet *one* of the following criteria:

1. It's extremely difficult for you to move at least two limbs, which results in the inability to perform one of the following physical activities:

- Standing from a seated position
- Balance while standing or walking without help from someone else, or the use of two crutches or a walker
- Walk without the use of two crutches, a walker, or a wheelchair

2. You have marked* physical limitations, plus limitations in one of the following areas of intellectual functioning:

- Understanding & remembering learned information
- Interacting with others in a workplace

- Concentrating and completing tasks
- “Managing oneself,” which means controlling temper or emotions

*“Marked limitation”—What’s the difference between this and the criteria in #1?

Basically, the SSA is looking for medical evidence that you have some difficulty physically moving, but it’s not so severe that you’re unable to stand from a chair or balance without assistance. Limited mobility that makes it challenging to perform workplace activities will qualify, like an inability to bend over and pick up items or perform dexterous movements like typing on a computer.

All of the [medical criteria](#) for qualifications are available online, so you can review the listing with [your doctor or therapist](#) to get a better sense of whether or not you’ll qualify.

Starting Your Application

Most people can apply for disability benefits [online](#). If you’re unable to type or look at a computer screen due to a TBI, a family member can fill out the application on your behalf.

If you’d prefer, you can also apply in person at your closest [Social Security office](#). There are more than 1,300 offices located across the country. You’ll need to make an appointment before dropping by your local office, but you can do so by calling the SSA toll free at 1-800-772-1213.

Resources Found Via:

- <https://www.ssa.gov/>
- <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/evidentiary.htm>
- https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/11.00-Neurological-Adult.htm#11_18
- <https://www.ssa.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/>
- <https://www.disability-benefits-help.org/blog/role-doctor-plays-disability-application-process>
- <https://www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability/>
- <https://www.disability-benefits-help.org/social-security-disability-locations>