

Can you work while collecting Social Security Disability?

As a Social Security Disability Attorney, people often ask me if being on Social Security Disability means you are not allowed to work. Social Security's definition of disability is "an inability to work." By this definition, working would disqualify someone from collecting disability at the same.

Social Security defines work in a particular way. One of the significant factors Social Security looks at is how much you earn from work monthly and whether it is above the substantial gainful activity amount (SGA). The SGA goes up yearly, but in 2022 it is \$1,350. If you earn less than that amount per month (before taxes), then you are still technically eligible for Social Security. Keep in mind that this applies only to income earned from work. Income from other sources doesn't disqualify you from Social Security Disability Insurance. Still, it might disqualify you from Supplemental Security Income, or SSI.

Even if you make more than \$1,350 monthly, Social Security has rules that allow you to work for some time without penalization if you cannot sustain that work. This is called a "trial work period," which can last nine months before Social Security might cease disability benefits.

The rules are slightly different if you are self-employed. In that case, Social Security considers both your income and whether the amount of work you are doing justifies your income. This assessment can be complicated, and you

should have an attorney assist you.

Though the ability to work is a factor in determining if somebody is disabled, working does not automatically disqualify you from collecting Social Security Disability. For a complete analysis, ask an attorney to help consider your options.