

Worst-Day C&P Exam Preparation Worksheet

Preparing to remember accurately — not to rehearse



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WHAT THIS WORKSHEET IS FOR

A VA claim exam — often called a Compensation & Pension (C&P) exam — is a medical evaluation VA uses to gather evidence about your condition. It is not a memory test, and it is not a performance. Examiners are trained to ask about your worst days, not just how you feel on an average day. Many veterans under-report because they're having a relatively good day at the appointment, or because they've adapted so completely to a limitation that they no longer think to mention it.

Preparation here means recalling your actual experience accurately — frequency, duration, severity, flare-ups, and how the condition affects your daily functioning — not memorizing talking points, not exaggerating, and not guessing at symptoms you don't have. Describe what is true, including on your hardest days, in plain language.

VA claim exams follow public Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) for many conditions. Reviewing the DBQ for your specific condition ahead of time can help you understand what an examiner is likely to measure and ask about.

BEFORE YOU GO: LOGISTICAL PREP

ITEM	STATUS
Confirmed exam date, time, and location by calling the number on your exam letter	☐
Updated address, phone, and email on file with VA	☐
Submitted any new non-VA medical records before the appointment	☐
Requested transportation or accommodation, if needed	☐

ITEM	STATUS
Requested a male or female provider, if needed and applicable	☐
Arranged childcare, if needed	☐
Reviewed the public DBQ for the condition(s) being examined	☐
Plan to arrive 15 minutes early	☐
SECTION 1 — FREQUENCY, DURATION, AND SEVERITY	

Complete this section for each condition being examined.

Condition: _____

How often does this occur? (daily, several times a week, weekly, monthly, constant) _____

How long does a typical episode or symptom last? _____

On a typical day, how would you describe the severity? _____

On your worst days, how would you describe the severity? _____

How often do you have a “worst day” in an average month? _____

SECTION 2 — FLARE-UPS

What triggers a flare-up, if you know?

What happens during a flare-up that doesn't happen on an ordinary day?

How long does a flare-up typically last, and how long is recovery?

What do you have to stop doing, or do differently, during a flare-up?

SECTION 3 — ORDINARY DAYS VS. DIFFICULT DAYS

	ORDINARY DAY	DIFFICULT / WORST DAY
Pain, symptoms, or limitations		
What you can still do		
What you cannot do or must modify		
Assistance or equipment needed		

SECTION 4 — FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS

Physical movement or mobility affected:

Concentration, memory, or cognitive effects:

Sleep affected (falling asleep, staying asleep, nightmares, fatigue the next day):

Social or relationship effects:

Emotional or mood effects:

Other body systems or conditions this affects:

SECTION 5 — WORK IMPACT

Current work status: _____

Missed work days in the last 12 months tied to this condition:

Tasks you can no longer do, or can only do with accommodation:

Changes you've made (reduced hours, different role, left a job) because of this condition:

SECTION 6 — HOUSEHOLD AND DAILY-LIFE IMPACT

Household tasks affected (cooking, cleaning, yard work, home repairs, driving):

Self-care tasks affected (dressing, bathing, grooming):

Help you receive from a spouse, family member, or caregiver, and how often:

Activities you've stopped doing because of this condition:

SECTION 7 — TREATMENT HISTORY

Current treatment (medication, therapy, surgery, devices):

How long you've been in treatment for this condition: _____

Providers seen (VA, private, or both): _____

Treatments tried that didn't help, or that you stopped and why:

DURING THE EXAM — REMINDERS

- The examiner is gathering information for your claim file. They are not there to treat you, and they cannot tell you your results or make decisions about your claim.
- It's normal for the exam to feel brief relative to how much you've lived with the condition. Answer based on your actual experience, including your worst days — not just how you feel that day.
- You can bring notes to reference during the appointment.
- You can ask for a break if you need one.
- If a topic is sensitive, you can ask about having a chaperone present.

POST-EXAM DEBRIEF

Fill this out as soon as possible after the exam, while it's fresh.

Conditions the examiner asked about:

Topics you feel you explained clearly:

Topics you wish you'd explained differently or more fully:

Anything the examiner didn't ask about that you think is relevant:

Tests, X-rays, or bloodwork ordered: _____

Follow-up steps (records to submit, forms to complete):

If something felt off about the exam itself, note it here — you can report concerns to VA or the exam contractor:

Note: You cannot get your exam results directly from the examiner. To request a copy of the completed exam report, you'll need to file a Freedom of Information Act / Privacy Act request (VA Form 20-10206).

WHAT THIS WORKSHEET IS NOT

This worksheet helps you organize an accurate account of your own experience ahead of a VA claim exam. It does not tell you what to say, does not coach exaggeration, and does not diagnose or rate any condition. VA examiners and adjudicators — not Veteran Claims — determine your rating. Veteran Claims is not part of, and is not endorsed by, the Department of Veterans Affairs.

VERIFIED AS OF AND SOURCES

Verified as of: August 11, 2026.

RULES CHANGE: Exam scheduling, contractors, and procedures can change — confirm current details in your own exam letter and at the official source links below.

- VA claim exam (C&P exam) — <https://www.va.gov/resources/va-claim-exam/>
- Public Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) — https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/dbq_publicdbqs.asp
- Freedom of Information Act / Privacy Act Request, VA Form 20-10206 — <https://www.va.gov/forms/20-10206>
- Update your contact information — <https://www.va.gov/change-address/>

Continue at the official source: <https://www.va.gov/resources/va-claim-exam/>