

Things You Need to Know Before Your Exam

1. You must tell the doctor why you are there.
 - a. For example, during the psych exam, you **MUST** tell them that your tinnitus is causing depression. Do **NOT** sit there and just answer questions.
2. Know your statement and stick to your story. Integrity is key.
 - a. For example, if you are claiming headaches secondary to tinnitus, maintain that tinnitus is the primary cause of your headaches throughout the process.
3. Describe your worst days when answering questions about symptoms.
 - a. Focus on describing your worst days or flare-ups to the VA, as they rate based on these periods. Don't downplay your symptoms by saying you're "fine," as it may not reflect the full impact of your condition.
 - b. The VA can lower your rating for conditions you are not claiming if you indicate improvement.
4. Think before you answer. The examiner may ask the same question multiple ways to catch inconsistencies.
5. Keep your answers short and to the point. Don't ramble.
 - a. Be concise with the examiner to avoid saying something that could hurt your claim. They have limited space to document your concerns and may focus on detrimental details.
6. Focus on how your condition affects your daily life.
 - a. Consider how your symptoms affect your family and work when answering VA questions, as they rate severity based on social and professional impact.
7. Keep the exam professional, not friendly.
 - a. Stay focused. Oversharing can hurt your claim. The examiner is there to work, not chat.
 - b. If asked how you're doing, simply say you're taking it day by day, then remain quiet to avoid saying anything detrimental.
8. When you get to the parking lot or turn on the camera your exam starts.
 - a. Assume you're being observed at all times. Avoid distractions like phone calls, social media, or other activities. You need to be focused for your exam.
9. If asked about the timing of your claim or gaps in treatment, politely explain that you didn't understand the process before, but you're here now to get better for your family.
10. Show emotion when discussing your condition's impact.
 - a. Think about not being able to play with your children or attend events you once enjoyed due to your condition. Reflect on how that makes you feel and the emotional toll it takes on you.
 - b. Beyond saying the right things, convey the depth of your experience through body language, tone of voice, mannerisms, and facial expressions to help the examiner understand your situation.
11. Focus solely on providing relevant details about how your military service caused or aggravated the disability you are claiming.
 - a. Do not mention any prior experiences or conditions unrelated to your military service.
12. Be ready for different types of questions. Each examiner has their own approach.
 - a. The examiner may contact you to discuss your medical records prior to the exam. If you are not prepared to discuss, politely tell them you wish to wait for the exam.
13. Remember, the purpose of these tips is to help you effectively communicate your experiences and challenges during the C&P exam, ensuring that the evaluator has a clear understanding of your condition and its impact on your life.