**California Department of Rehabilitation**

[**Spotlight on Social Security**](https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/Ssa)

Social Security Myth #3 – if I go to work and have to stop working because of my disability, I won’t be able to get back on benefits!



It’s not true! One common myth is that if Social Security Disability benefits (SSI or SSDI) benefits stop due to work, you won’t be able to get back on benefits again. In reality, there is a work incentive designed to support you in getting your benefits back when you need them most.

**Programs and Support:**

There is a lot of information to help you understand how working can fit into your life without jeopardizing your Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). These resources are just a starting point.

* **Department of Rehabilitation (DOR):** [DOR](https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/SswAndTtw) offers employment services, job training, and support for individuals with disabilities.
* **Social Security Administration (SSA) – Ticket to Work (TTW) Program:** Helps people who get disability benefits explore work and new careers. ​[Choose Work!](https://choosework.ssa.gov/)
* **Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Projects:** [WIPA](https://choosework.ssa.gov/findhelp) counselors explain how working might change your benefits and what help you can get.
* **Protection & Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS):** [PABSS](https://www.ssa.gov/work/protectionadvocacy.html) helps protect your rights if you have trouble at work. [Find PABSS Services](https://www.disabilityrightsca.org/publications/the-pabss-program-protection-advocacy-for-beneficiaries-of-social-security)
* **Disability Benefits 101 (DB101) –** [DB101](https://ca.db101.org/) website shows how working can fit with your benefits and explains special incentives like Expedited Reinstatement ([EXR](https://ca.db101.org/ca/situations/workandbenefits/myths/article2f.htm)).

**Work Incentive:**

**Expedited Reinstatement (EXR) –** [Expedited Reinstatement](https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/wi/exr.htm) (EXR) is a work incentive from the Social Security Administration (SSA) that allows you to get your Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) back if you had to stop working because of your disability — without having to start over with a new application!

**How Expedited Reinstatement Works-**

* **Who Qualifies for EXR?** You may qualify for EXR if:
	+ Your disability benefits (SSDI or SSI) stopped because you returned to work and earned over the [substantial gainful activity](https://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/sga.html) (SGA) limit.
	+ You stopped working because of your disability (or a similar issue).
	+ You request EXR within five years from when your benefits stopped.
* **How to Apply for EXR-** If you find that your disability prevents you from continuing work, you can request Expedited Reinstatement by:
	+ Contacting your local SSA office or calling 1-800-772-1213.
	+ Completing the Request for Reinstatement
		- [Form SSA-371](https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-371.pdf) (for SSDI) or [Form SSA-372](https://www.ssa.gov/forms/ssa-372.pdf) (for SSI)
	+ Share updated medical information showing you can’t keep working.
* **What Happens After You Apply?**
	+ You can receive up to six months of temporary benefits (called provisional benefits) while SSA reviews your medical condition.
	+ If they decide you don’t qualify later, you don’t have to pay that money back.
	+ If you are approved, your full benefits will start again!
* **Returning to Work Again After EXR-** If your benefits are reinstated, you will be eligible for work incentives based on your disability benefit type.
	+ Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) – New Trial Work Period (TWP) and Extended Period of Eligibility (EPE) to try working again without immediately losing benefits.

**Practical Steps to Navigate Working and Benefits:**

Knowledge is power! It all starts with understanding your options. Keep track of your earnings, stay informed about work incentives, and know that EXR is the safety net if your disability prevents you from working. If needed, act quickly to request EXR, submit medical proof, and receive temporary benefits while SSA reviews your case.

**Key Takeaways:**

* You are not stuck! If working doesn’t work out because of your disability, EXR gives you a way to get your benefits back.
* You can dream big! You can try working and becoming more independent, knowing there’s a safety net if you need it.

By utilizing these resources, individuals like you, receiving Social Security Disability benefits can make informed decisions about going to work for the first time, or returning to work. That choice is a powerful step toward independence and growth, so remember, work is an opportunity, not a risk. With EXR and other supports, you can pursue your goals boldly, knowing your well-being comes first.

Still not convinced? Check out these amazing video success stories from DOR clients receiving Social Security disability benefits on our [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxQhTEDVJyHCd82zMdT_WCAjRhZhTx6dd) page.

