



**Sharon Christie Law**

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# The Christie Report

**Social Security Disability**

**April/May 2013**

## Personal Message - from Sharon

### What You Can Learn from March Madness

I am writing this note on Sunday, March 24 – in the middle of March Madness. I don't follow college basketball very closely during the season but, like many people, I do pay attention during the NCAA tournament. I even fill out a bracket which is now totally "busted"! I picked Gonzaga to win it all and they only managed to win one game before a 9 seed (that means a team that most people think will lose) beat them and sent them home. That has happened a lot in this tournament. A 15 seed (who nobody had ever heard of) beat the mighty Georgetown – extraordinary! So what is the message? The underdog CAN WIN! Why? Because people underestimate the underdog's talent but that is only a small part of it. People greatly underestimate the underdog's persistence and belief in himself.

It reminds me a lot of the Social Security disability process. We are the underdog trying to challenge that giant – the Social Security Administration (SSA). SSA underestimates our talent – which in this case is the strength of your evidence and our ability to gather the necessary evidence. But even more importantly, SSA underestimates our persistence and belief in our ability to win!

I know it is hard for you to be persistent in the face of multiple denials from SSA, but that is what it takes to win. I know it is hard to believe in yourself and your case when the process drags on for 2 years. But that is what it takes to win. So, when we tell you to hang in there with us and don't give up, we REALLY mean it! Think of those underdog teams that win. That can, and will be, you!

### Thanks for the Referrals

The greatest compliment I can receive is for clients and colleagues to refer new clients. Thank you to everyone who referred clients in February & March.

<b>Linda Butler</b>	<b>Erin Voss, Esq.</b>	<b>Christopher Higdon</b>	<b>Mark Hutson</b>
<b>Jazmine Jenkins</b>	<b>Charmaine Kline</b>	<b>Pernell Leake</b>	<b>Ellen Ruberry</b>
<b>Thomas McDonough, Esq.</b>	<b>Lupus Foundation of America—DMV Chapter</b>	<b>Michael Freedman, Esq.</b>	<b>Mosaic of Timonium</b>
<b>Cami Rogers, Esq.</b>	<b>Saiontz &amp; Kirk</b>	<b>Sinai RETURN! Program</b>	

### How do I describe my physical limitations in a disability hearing?

Your testimony in the Social Security disability hearing is extremely important. You can improve your chance of winning if you are prepared to give detailed information about how your condition affects your ability to work 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. In addition, you must show the judge why you could not do even a "sit down" job.

#### Residual Functional Capacity

At your Social Security disability hearing, you will be expected to answer questions regarding your Residual Functional Capacity (RFC). Listed below are some common RFC questions.

*(continued on pg. 2)*

## How do I describe my physical limitations in a disability hearing? (continued)

As part of your answer, you will be required to estimate your capacity to perform these activities in a typical work setting on a day-to-day basis, 8 hours per day, 5 days per week, about 50 weeks per year. Also, be prepared to provide specific examples of your limitations due to your disability.

### **SITTING**

#### **Can you sit down without pain or discomfort?**

#### **How long can you sit:**

- In a continuous period of time?
- Overall, during an 8 hour working day with the usual breaks in between?

#### **Are you able to sit:**

- Without fidgeting or propping yourself on elbows?

#### **Can you sit:**

- At a desk?
- In an office chair (with or without arms)?
- On a bar stool (with or without a back)?
- At a bench?
- In a typing position?
- With your arms stretched out?
- With your hands free to move items?
- With your neck slightly hunched forward?

#### **If sitting down for a long period of time is too painful, describe:**

- How the pain varies
- The type of pain, movements that cause it, and the severity of the pain
- Your attempts to manage the pain (such as moving positions while sitting down, leaning, getting up)

#### **How long can you manage to sit before standing up?**

- Describe your tolerance level for:
  - Standing
  - Walking
- How long do you have to wait before you can sit again?

#### **Do you have to raise a leg when you sit? If so:**

- Which leg is it, and how long and how far do you elevate it?

#### **As you get up from sitting:**

- Do you have a companion help you get up?
- Do you feel adversarial effects when you initially get up? Is it caused by nausea, stiffness, pain?

### **EXAMPLES OF LIMITATIONS**

#### **What occurs if you sit down for an extended period of time, as when you are:**

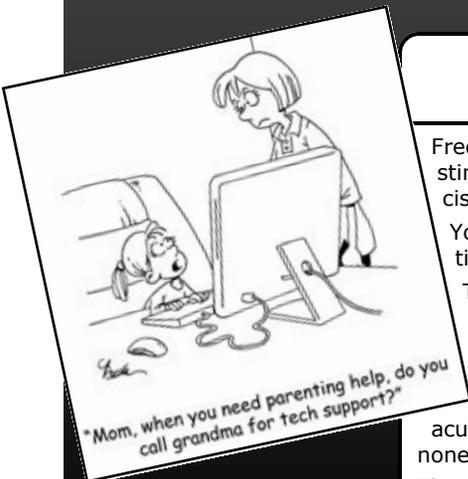
- Driving or a passenger in a car?
- Sitting down to eat?
- Paying bills?
- Watching a movie or television?
- Fishing?

#### **Did you have to give up or restrict any hobby because of your struggle to sit?**

## The Lighter Side

A boss complained that he wasn't getting any respect. He went to a local sign shop & bought a small sign that read, "I'm the Boss." He then hung it on his office door.

Later that day, he found a note taped to the sign that said, "You're wife called. She wants her sign back!"



## Dancing Makes You Smarter

Frequent dancing apparently makes us smarter. A major study added to the growing evidence that stimulating one's mind can ward off Alzheimer's disease and other dementia, much as physical exercise can keep the body fit. Dancing also increases cognitive acuity at all ages.

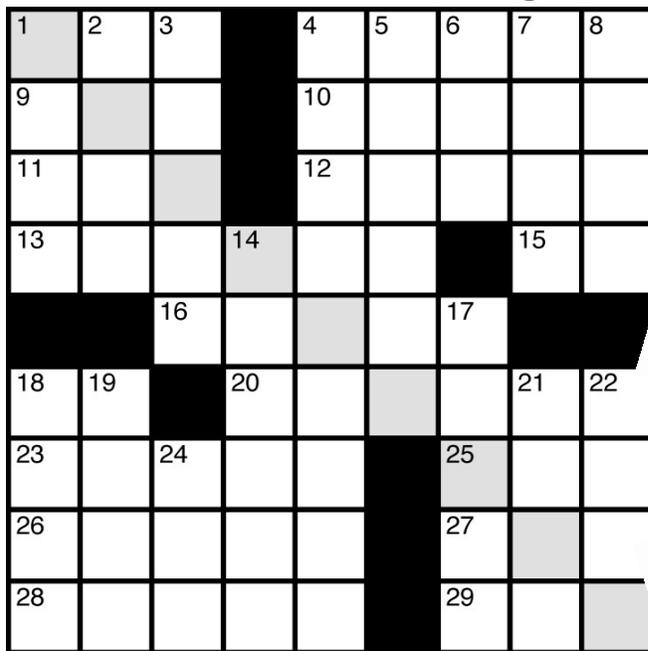
You may have heard about the New England Journal of Medicine report on the effects of recreational activities on mental acuity in aging. Here it is in a nutshell.

The 21-year study of senior citizens, 75 and older, was led by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City, funded by the National Institute on Aging, and published in the New England Journal of Medicine. Their method for objectively measuring mental acuity in aging was to monitor rates of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease.

The study wanted to see if any physical or cognitive recreational activities influenced mental acuity. They discovered that some activities had a significant beneficial effect. Other activities had none.

They studied cognitive activities such as reading books, writing for pleasure, doing crossword puzzles, & playing musical instruments. And they studied physical activities like playing tennis, swimming, dancing, walking and doing housework. One of the surprises of the study was that almost none of the

Another kind of word game



**Across**

- 1. Feel sick
- 4. Device used to control sound volume
- 9. Mozart's "L' \_\_\_ del Cairo"
- 10. Over 21
- 11. "\_\_\_ any drop to drink"  
Coleridge
- 12. Not rural
- 13. Concert finale
- 15. Carry out
- 16. Watered the plants
- 18. You and me
- 20. Senile person
- 23. Kingdom
- 25. "Rocky \_\_\_"
- 26. See eye to eye
- 27. Big TV maker
- 28. Fertile soil
- 29. "Amen!"

**Down**

- 1. Bang-up
- 2. Computer image
- 3. Coniferous tree
- 4. Groups for golf
- 5. Evil jinnee, demon or monstrous giant
- 6. Apply gently
- 7. "Good grief!"
- 8. Ashcroft's predecessor
- 14. Scads
- 17. Grocery store section
- 18. Russia's \_\_\_ Moun tains
- 19. Utah's state flower
- 21. Author of "Lasher"
- 22. "Buenos \_\_\_"
- 24. "You \_\_\_ here"

Happy Mother's Day! May 12

**FREE Seminars**

**- Social Security Disability -**

See website for info & to register  
sharonchristielaw.com/events/seminars  
Or call 410-823-8200

**April 24, 1-3pm Bel Air Library**  
**April 24, 6-8pm White Marsh Library**  
**May 22, 6-8pm White Marsh Library**  
**May 29, 1-3pm Bel Air Library**

**Baltimore Events**

**Baltimore Museum of Industry  
Family Fun Nights**

2nd Thursday of each month | 4-6pm  
1415 Key Hwy  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
Tours, crafts, movies and more!

**Zap! Pow! Bam! The Superhero: The  
Golden Age of Comic Books**

Thru August 18, 2013  
The Jewish Museum of Maryland  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
410-732-6400

**Underground Railroad Bus Tour**

Historical Society of Baltimore County  
April 27 | Time & cost to be announced  
410-685-3750

**Chamber Music by Candlelight**

April 28 | 7:30pm  
**Dohnanyi & Beethoven**  
FREE  
Second Presbyterian Church  
4200 St. Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21218  
443-759-3309

**Afternoon Concert**

May 19 | 3:30pm  
**Bryant Park Quartet**  
FREE  
Second Presbyterian Church  
4200 St. Paul St., Baltimore, MD 21218

**Dancing Makes You Smarter (continued)**

physical activities appeared to offer any protection against dementia. There can be cardiovascular benefits, of course, but the focus of this study was the mind. There was one important exception: **the only physical activity to offer protection against dementia was frequent dancing.**

- Reading - 35% reduced risk of dementia
- Bicycling and swimming - 0%
- Doing crossword puzzles at least four days a week - 47%
- Playing golf - 0%

**Dancing frequently - 76%**

Dancing offered the greatest risk reduction of ANY activity studied. Like education, participation in some leisure activities lowers the risk of dementia by improving cognitive reserve. The essence of intelligence is making decisions. And the concluding advice for improving mental acuity is to **involve yourself in activities which require split-second, rapid-fire decision making.** Dancing integrates several brain functions at once, which results in generating new pathways in your brain. Social dancing, done often, is very effective in creating new pathways, because it requires split-second decision making by both the lead dancer and the one who follows! So start dancing now. Some day you'll need as many of those pathways as possible!

**Find out more here— [socialdance.stanford.edu/syllabi/smarter.htm](http://socialdance.stanford.edu/syllabi/smarter.htm) .**

**Law Offices of Sharon A. Christie, P.A.**  
**201 W. Padonia Rd., Suite 101**  
**Timonium, MD 21093**

To receive a **FREE** copy of

**Sharon Christie's**  
*Unofficial Guide to Social Security Disability Claims*

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**April/May 2013**



The **Law Office of Sharon A. Christie** helps disabled workers get disability benefits from Social Security. It is a long and complicated process and you should not go it alone.

The firm's founder, Sharon A. Christie, is a nurse as well as an attorney.

**Sharon's clients receive the benefit of having their cases handled by a firm that knows the medicine AND the law.**

If you have applied for Social Security disability benefits and need help, call the firm today. If you need more information about the process, go to the website and order a FREE copy of:

***Sharon Christie's Unofficial Guide to Social Security Disability Claims***

or register for one of her upcoming seminars!

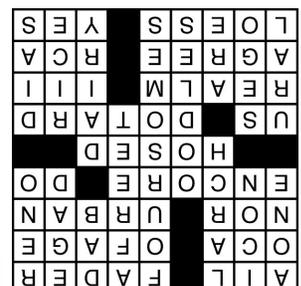
For more information, visit our website at:  
**[www.SharonChristieLaw.com](http://www.SharonChristieLaw.com)**.

**Office Hours**

**M-F 9am to 5pm**

**800-218-7062**  
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