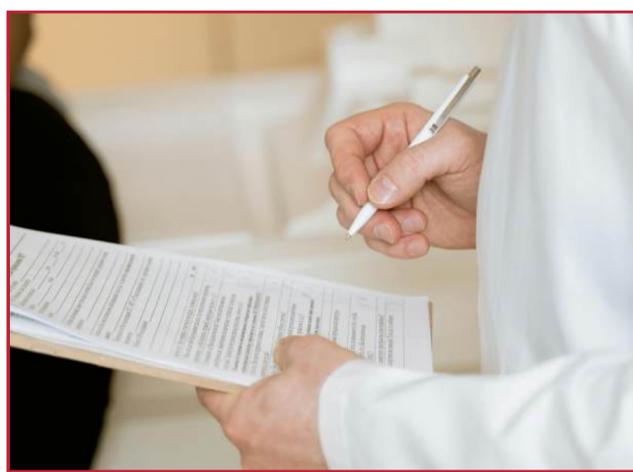


# 5

## Ways to Boost Your VA Rating for Back Pain

### 1. Get a Current Diagnosis

If you were diagnosed in the military, this is great news for you. You have a clear service connection. However, if you haven't been seen for your back pain in the last few years, make an appointment and see your doctor. You want to show that the back pain is a big part of your life—so big that you're actively getting treatment from a doctor.



### 2. Establish a Service Connection

It's not enough to show that you were in the military and that you now have back pain. You have to demonstrate a connection. If your military records include a back pain diagnosis, that helps, but without one, a physician's nexus letter stating it's "at least as likely as not" linked to your service is crucial.

### 3. Write a Powerful Personal Statement

Neither your personal doctor nor the VA doctor sees how your back pain affects you from day to day. Use your personal statement to convey the full story. You can use your personal statement to talk about your experiences in the military that contributed to your back problems.



### 4. Prepare for Your C&P Exam

This is the single most important event of your VA claims preparation, so make sure you're ready for it. This exam is conducted by a VA doctor (or contracted doctor). The doctor will assess the severity of your back injury and verify that it is service-connected.

### 5. File for Secondary Conditions

Back pain can lead to many other problems: weight gain, diabetes, obstructive sleep apnea, depression, and anxiety. If you are rated for back pain (even at the 0% level), you can file for conditions secondary to that pain.

