

ORDINARY CONDITIONS OF LIFE AND WORK

Improvement during rest or a restrictive regimen may not show improvement in ordinary life.



ASK
Where did improvement occur?

COMPARE
Rest or regimen versus normal activity

DOCUMENT
Function across time

RULE FILE The reduction analysis must consider whether improvement occurred while the veteran was working or actively seeking work, or only while symptoms were controlled by prolonged rest or a regimen that prevents ordinary activity.

FUNCTION 01 | CONTEXT COMPARISON

WHERE THE BETTER FINDINGS CAME FROM

REST

Prolonged rest
Better findings during bed rest, reduced activity, or recovery may not translate to ordinary functioning.

REGIMEN

Restrictive treatment
A demanding regimen that controls symptoms only by preventing work or normal activity needs context.

WORK

Ordinary activity
Evidence of function while working, seeking work, traveling, completing chores, or maintaining a normal schedule is more probative.

FUNCTION 02 | EVIDENCE MAP

DOCUMENT FUNCTION, NOT ONLY SYMPTOMS

DAY

Typical day
Describe the pace, assistance, breaks, recovery time, and activities that are actually sustainable.

FLARE

Bad periods and recovery
Record frequency, duration, triggers, functional limits, and the time required to return to baseline.

WORK

Employment context
Address attendance, accommodations, reduced duties, productivity, and why work stopped or changed.

CARE

Treatment burden
Explain medication effects, appointments, devices, therapy, rest, and restrictions needed to maintain current function.

FUNCTION 03 | PRACTICAL STATEMENT

A USEFUL FUNCTIONAL COMPARISON

Before the claimed improvement	What could the veteran do, how often, and with what assistance or recovery?	FUNCTIONAL BASELINE
At the recent exam	What conditions, rest, medication, or limited activity affected the snapshot?	EXAM CONTEXT
Across ordinary life	Has capacity actually and durably increased outside the examination room?	REAL-WORLD CHANGE

FUNCTION IS THE BRIDGE

A diagnosis can remain the same while severity changes. The key comparison is whether disability and functional impairment materially improved in ordinary life.

