

UNSKILLED SEDENTARY WORK AND THE USE OF BOTH HANDS

The Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) is a publication used by the Social Security Administration that attempts to catalogue the number and type of jobs that exist in the U.S. national economy. It is also used to determine, among other things, the skill level and exertional requirements of each of those occupations. A claimant's specific work history is defined partially by the skill level and the exertional level required by their former jobs as described by the DOT.

The skill level of each occupation listed is defined in terms of how long it is expected a typical worker to learn how to perform that particular job in an actual work environment. Unskilled work is defined by the DOT as work that can be learned after only a short demonstration or anything beyond a short demonstration up to and including one month of training. Skill levels are described as "SVP" levels, meaning "specific vocational preparation." An SVP of 1 would require only a short demonstration, and an SVP of 2 would require anything beyond a short demonstration up to and including one month of training. Each occupation listed in the DOT has an SVP rating contained in the job description. The majority of sedentary jobs are skilled, requiring more time to learn than non-skilled jobs.

Sedentary work is defined by the DOT as any occupation that requires at least 6 hours of sitting and 2 hours of standing in an 8 hour workday. Sedentary work also involves lifting up to 10 pounds occasionally and 5 lbs. frequently. "Frequently" means 1/3 to 2/3 of a workday, and "occasionally" means up to 1/3 of an 8 hour workday.

Job placement for unskilled workers who are limited to sedentary work becomes more difficult when the worker does not have the full use of both hands. Most unskilled sedentary work requires the full use of both hands for handling and manipulating objects or materials, such as in inspecting or assembly jobs. Prominent vocational experts are frequently of the opinion that the loss of the full use of either hand will restrict a worker's productivity and therefore limit their ability to sustain unskilled work activity over time.