



Quiz: How Much Do You Know About Social Security Retirement Benefits?

Social Security is an important source of retirement income for millions of Americans, but how much do you know about this program? Test your knowledge, and learn more about your retirement benefits, by answering the following questions.

Questions

1. Do you have to be retired to collect Social Security retirement benefits?

- a. Yes
- b. No

2. How much is the average monthly Social Security benefit for a retired worker?

- a. \$1,360
- b. \$1,493
- c. \$1,585
- d. \$1,723

3. For each year you wait past your full retirement age to collect Social Security, how much will your retirement benefit increase?

- a. 5%
- b. 6%
- c. 7%
- d. 8%

4. How far in advance should you apply for Social Security retirement benefits?

- a. One month before you want your benefits to start.
- b. Two months before you want your benefits to start.
- c. Three months before you want your benefits to start.

5. Is it possible for your retirement benefit to increase once you start receiving Social Security?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Answers

1. b. You don't need to stop working in order to claim Social Security retirement benefits. However, if you plan to continue working and you have not yet reached full retirement age (66 to 67, depending on your year of birth), your Social Security retirement benefit may be reduced if you earn more than a certain annual amount. In 2017, \$1 in benefits will be deducted for every \$2 you earn above \$16,920. In the calendar year in which you reach your full retirement age, a higher limit applies. In 2017, \$1 in benefits will be deducted for every \$3 you earn above \$44,880. Once you reach full retirement age, your earnings will not affect your Social Security benefit.

2. a. Your benefit will depend on your earnings history and other factors, but according to the Social Security Administration, the average estimated monthly Social Security benefit for a retired worker (as of January 2017) is \$1,360.¹

3. d. Starting at full retirement age, you will earn delayed retirement credits that will increase your benefit by 8% per year up to age 70. For example, if your full retirement age is 66, you can earn credits for a maximum of four years. At age 70, your benefit will then be 32% higher than it would have been at full retirement age.

4. c. According to the Social Security Administration, you should ideally apply three months before you want your benefits to start. You can generally apply online.

5. a. There are several reasons why your benefit might increase after you begin receiving it. First, you'll generally receive annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). Second, your benefit is recalculated every year to account for new earnings, so it might increase if you continue working. Your benefit might also be adjusted if you qualify for a higher spousal benefit once your spouse files for Social Security.

For more information, visit the Social Security Administration website, ssa.gov.

¹Social Security Fact Sheet, 2017 Social Security Changes

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