

Mobility and ALS

If ALS affects your ability to walk and move around your home and community, there are a variety of assistive devices that can help. Acknowledging that you may need a walking aid or wheelchair can be difficult, but being realistic and getting mobility devices that match your current needs can help you stay safe, be more independent, save energy, and go where you want to go.

If you or your loved ones have any concerns that your movements are unsteady, or that you are getting easily fatigued when moving around, meeting with your physical therapist is a good way to address these concerns. Getting the right device at the right time can help prevent falls and avoid injuries that could lead to additional complications.



Ankle Foot Orthoses (AFOs)

If you are having difficulty walking because your foot is dragging or catching on the ground, an ankle foot brace (AFO) or molded ankle foot orthotic (MAFO) can make a big difference. AFOs can help you walk more safely and efficiently by lifting your foot, stabilizing your foot and ankle, and improving your balance.

Walking Aids

Walking aids can assist you with balance, stability, and safety. They range from simple canes to four-wheel walkers with brakes and seats. If an AFO helps you walk better, you can wear it while using your walking aid.

Front-wheel walkers may help with balance and stability if your cane no longer provides enough support. Four-wheel walkers, also known as rollators, are sturdy walking aids that have handles, hand brakes, and a seat that allows you to sit and rest.

Manual and Transport Wheelchairs

If walking is becoming more difficult or exhausting, you may want to consider getting a manual or transport wheelchair, either of which can be helpful for conserving energy, preventing falls, and going longer distances.

Power Mobility Options

If you need more mobility assistance than a walker or manual wheelchair can provide, there are a number of power mobility options.

Motorized scooters have handlebars out front, so you must have enough shoulder and trunk strength to reach out and operate the hand controls. Standard power wheelchairs provide more support than scooters, have a better turning radius within the home, and are hand-operated with a small joystick. Portable power wheelchairs are similar to standard power wheelchairs but they are lighter and easier to transport.

Custom power wheelchairs provide the greatest long-term comfort, support, and functionality. Their more advanced technology—including tilt, recline, and power leg rests—can adapt to your evolving needs. The ability to tilt and recline can help relieve pressure to make you more comfortable.

Getting and Paying for Mobility Devices

It is important to be proactive and plan ahead so you don't get stuck waiting for your next mobility device. The process of qualifying for, ordering, and receiving your custom power wheelchair, for example, can take 30-60 days or more. Whenever you sense that you may need more mobility support, reach out to your ALS clinic or medical team. Your physical and occupational therapist can conduct evaluations and recommend the devices that will work best for you.

A number of mobility devices, including AFOs, walkers, manual wheelchairs, and custom power wheelchairs, should be covered by a combination of Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance.

If you will need to pay for some or all of the cost out of pocket, ask your ALS clinic and **local ALS organization** if you can borrow devices from their equipment loan closet at no cost. You can also visit the ALS Equipment Guide (www.youralsguide.com/als-equipment-guide) to learn more and purchase some devices directly.

Get Local Support

For local support and resources contact us at #303-832-2322, email careservices@alsaco.org or visit our website at: www.alsrockymountain.org



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