



ALS and Social Security Disability

Written On September 15, 2009 By [Bob Kraft](#)

A number of our Social Security Disability clients suffer from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) or Lou Gehrig's Disease. Individuals suffering from this disorder frequently experience the following symptoms:

- weakness in the hand, foot, arm, or leg,
- difficulty speaking and swallowing, and
- difficulty walking.

The course of prescribed treatment can include night-time breathing assistance, a prescription of Riluzole (believed to reduce the damage of motor neurons), and stem cell or gene therapy. While not all individuals who have been diagnosed with ALS will be found disabled under Social Security rules, one source of information for people with ALS that we recommend is the [ALS Association](#). The ALS Association is a non-profit with great information and resources for those suffering from ALS, and you can learn a great deal by visiting their Web site.

Recently we have assisted individuals with severe ALS in getting Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income. Their cases were among the more severe of those suffering with the disease. The degree of frequency and severity of an individual's symptoms are unique in each case and will determine, to a large degree, whether an individual claim will be granted benefits.

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Some diseases are included in Social Security's Listing of impairments and some are not. In some instances, a disease, while not Listed, is addressed in a Social Security Ruling. The Rulings offer guidance but do not set out specific criteria for an award of benefits. Other diseases are not in the Listings nor recognized in a Social Security Ruling. But that does not mean that the disease cannot be the basis of a disability claim.

Regardless of the disease, you or your lawyer should have the following:

- a good working list of your symptoms,
- a knowledge of the degree of certainty of your diagnosis,
- a general understanding of the consistency between your symptoms and your diagnosis,
- a good understanding of what evidence might best support your contention that your symptoms are disabling, and
- which legal theory will most likely be accepted by the Social Security Administration given the particular facts of the entire case.

If you, or someone you know, is suffering from severe ALS with severe symptoms, consider contacting The ALS Association for additional information on the disorder. If you are considering a Social Security Disability claim, we advise you to speak with an attorney. We handle cases throughout the state of Texas, but we can also give you a referral if we are unable to assist you.