

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration



## INTRODUCTION

The International Space Station, one of the most ambitious international collaborations ever attempted, is a convergence of science, technology, and human innovation that provides humanity a one-of-a-kind proving ground for Artemis as we go forward to the Moon and on to Mars. It is a demonstration platform for new technologies and a research laboratory for breakthroughs not possible on Earth, representing the most complex space exploration program ever undertaken.

In the more than two decades that humans have inhabited the space station, we've used the unique orbiting laboratory to build our understanding of how humans can safely live in microgravity, make groundbreaking advancements in medicine, test technologies that will help us travel farther into space, gain new insights into our home planet, and stimulate an emerging low Earth orbit economy.

## BENEFITS TO HUMANITY

Station activities and research have led to new products to purify air and water in our homes, use of cold plasmas in wound treatment, tracking technology for laser-eye surgery, non-invasive temperature monitoring of babies in hospitals, and advancements in telemedicine.

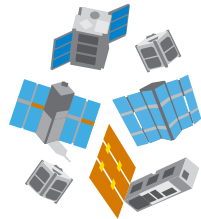
**Proteins crystallized** on the space station have aided in development of a treatment for Duchenne's Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) and is in Phase 3 clinical trials.



New combustion discoveries like **"cool flames"** may help reduce engine emissions.

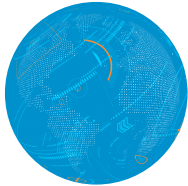


Several **air-quality technologies** developed for the space station have been demonstrated to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.



More than **250 small satellites** have been deployed from station since 2013, improving Earth-observation photography, internet access, and telecommunication services.

**ECOSTRESS data** has been employed in efforts to reduce heat absorbed by city surfaces and help farmers efficiently water their fields.



In 2019, the station was opened for **commercial activities**, including private astronaut missions.



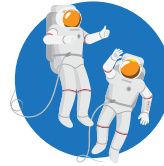
## THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION AT A GLANCE



Required a collaborative effort by **15 nations** to construct.



Has had a **continuous human presence** since November 2000.



Has required more than **250 spacewalks** (and counting) for assembly, maintenance and upgrades.



Measures **357 feet end-to-end** and has a mass of nearly 1 million pounds.

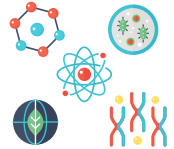
Travels at an average altitude of about **227 nautical miles (420 kilometers)** above Earth.

Earth **227** nautical miles ↓

**SPEED LIMIT**  
**17,500**  
**MPH**

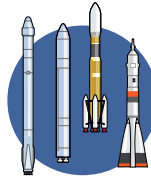
Travels at **17,500 mph**, covering the equivalent distance to the Moon and back in about a day.

Has seen more than **3,300 experiments** conducted so far.



## LIVING AND WORKING IN SPACE

Over the past 20 years, the space station has evolved from an orbiting outpost, where 34 investigations were conducted by the first crew, to a capable laboratory with about 300 active investigations during each crew rotation.



Astronauts receive **supplies from uncrewed vehicles** provided by various countries and commercial sources.

An astronaut's usual stay aboard the orbiting laboratory is around **six months**.

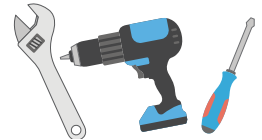


A daily **two-hour exercise program** is critical for astronauts to counteract the physical effects of living in microgravity.

Astronauts sleep in **special sleeping bags** secured to the wall of their personal crew quarters.



Astronauts spend their time in space **conducting scientific experiments** and **maintaining the space station**.



International Space Station: [nasa.gov/station](https://nasa.gov/station) | Station Science: [nasa.gov/iss-science](https://nasa.gov/iss-science) | Spot the Station in the night sky: [spotthestation.nasa.gov/](https://spotthestation.nasa.gov/)

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