

NASA schedules four ISS spacewalks

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NASA astronauts are to conduct an unprecedented series of four spacewalks during the next month at the International Space Station.

ISS Expedition 14 Cmdr. Mike Lopez-Alegria and astronaut Suni Williams will begin the series with a 6 1/2-hour excursion Jan. 31, with subsequent spacewalks scheduled Feb. 4 and Feb. 8. Those spacewalks will be conducted using U.S. spacesuits and will start from the station's Quest airlock.

The fourth spacewalk, scheduled later in February, will be conducted by Lopez-Alegria and cosmonaut Mikhail Tyurin using Russian spacesuits from the station's Pirs airlock.

The spacewalks by Lopez-Alegria and Williams will involve, among other things, bringing on line new portions of the station's cooling system that were installed during a December space shuttle mission.

The fourth spacewalk will involve removing a stuck antenna from a Russian cargo spacecraft docked at the aft end of the station. Removing the antenna will ensure it can safely undock in early April.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration officials in Houston are to preview the spacewalks at 1 p.m. Friday during a briefing to be broadcast by NASA Television and streamed on the Internet at nasa.gov.

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