

MIT seeks funding for elastic spacesuit

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Scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are seeking funding to develop a skin-tight, next-generation spacesuit for a possible mission to Mars.

The lightweight, stretchable "Bio-Suit" was envisioned by NASA in the 1990s, but funding to develop the futurist garment dried up. A team of MIT researchers and engineers believe they could develop a prototype suit and have it ready for production by 2012, The Boston Herald reported Wednesday.

"It is possible that this could be worn by astronauts by the time we go back to the moon in 2020 and could even be worn to Mars," said David Newman, an aeronautics and aerospace professor who heads the "Bio-Suit" project at MIT.

The spandex and nylon spacesuit would be perfectly tailored to fit in the vacuum of space but would be extremely difficult to put on while on Earth, the newspaper said. Air pressure in a "Bio-Suit" would be directly on the skin of the wearer instead of inside the bulky pressurized spacesuits used today, Newman said.

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