

Space station astronauts 'spacewalk' in airlock

June 10 2009

(AP) -- Two international space station crewmen squeezed into a small airlock Wednesday and moved a docking mechanism to accommodate a research module expected to arrive later this year.

American Michael Barratt and Russian Gennady Padalka entered the transfer compartment in the station's Russian-made Zvezda service module 10 minutes behind schedule because of initial problems with pressure inside the airlock, which did not fall as fast as expected.

But they got the job done quickly and emerged from the cramped airlock after 12 minutes.

"Excellent, Michael, good going," Padalka told Barratt at one point, after his crewmate removed the docking cone from its initial position.

While they were not in open space, Padalka and Barratt had to wear space suits in the depressurized compartment and the operation was considered a spacewalk - the 125th conducted for construction and maintenance of the 10-year-old station.

The bulky suits made for a tight fit in the 9-by-5 foot (2.75-by-1.5 meter) airlock.

"You need to move down even more, I think there's more space at the bottom," one of the men said at one point. "No, there's no more room," came the reply.

It was the eighth space walk for Padalka, a veteran of the Soviet-built Mir space station who has spent more than 27 hours on spacewalks.

It was Barratt's second. He and Padalka conducted a nearly five-hour [spacewalk](#) on Friday that was also part of preparations for the arrival of the Russian Mini Research Module-2 later this year. The module will serve as an additional docking port for Russian vehicles.

The station's permanent crew doubled to six last month and currently comprises two Russians, an American, a Canadian, a Japanese and a Belgian.

©2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: Space station astronauts 'spacewalk' in airlock (2009, June 10) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-06-space-station-astronauts-spacewalk-airlock.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.