

Astronauts move old space station docking port

February 16 2010, By MARCIA DUNN , AP Aerospace Writer



In this photo provided by NASA, astronaut Robert Behnken participates in the mission's second session of extravehicular activity as construction and maintenance continue on the International Space Station, Sunday, Feb. 14, 2010. (AP Photo/NASA)

(AP) -- Astronauts did some rearranging at the International Space Station for the second night in a row Monday, moving an old docking adapter into a new position.

A pair of spacemen used the station's hefty [robot arm](#) to remove the 10-year-old adapter from the space station and transfer it to a port at the new room, [Tranquility](#). There, it will provide an extra parking spot for visiting vessels and serve as a buffer against micrometeorite hits.

As that work was going on, the crews of the shuttle and station were

connecting power and data lines in the new \$27 million observation deck that was moved to its permanent location early Monday. Later this week, the domed, seven-windowed lookout will get its most important addition: a robotic work station for operating the station's mechanical arm.

"It's a beautiful module," said shuttle pilot Terry Virts.

Monday's work unfolded on the eve of the third and final spacewalk of Endeavour's mission. Robert Behnken and Nicholas Patrick will venture back out Tuesday night and unlock the shutters on the lookout's windows, enabling their colleagues inside to crank open the shutters.

The [astronauts](#) can't wait to gaze down at Earth through those windows; the center one is the biggest window ever flown in space.

Behnken and Patrick were the ones who operated the robot arm during Monday night's moving operation.

"Take the rest of the afternoon off," Mission Control radioed after the relocation job was completed. Mission Control gave the two crews Tuesday morning off to prepare for the [spacewalk](#) finale; it's afternoon to the astronauts, who are working the graveyard shift in orbit.

Endeavour and its crew of six will depart the space station Friday after a visit of 1 1/2 weeks. They've already accomplished their major objective: delivering and installing Tranquility and the [observation deck](#), European contributions.

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