

Spacewalkers complete tiring work at space station (Update)

June 19 2014, by Marcia Dunn



Russian space station crew member Oleg Artemiev floats outside the International Space Station during a space walk by two Russians, Thursday, June 16, 2014, to install a new antenna and move a cargo boom. Alexander Skvortsov and Artemiev will also switch out some science experiments. (AP Photo/NASA-TV)

A pair of spacewalking astronauts managed to install a new antenna and complete other work Thursday outside the International Space Station, despite stubborn equipment.

Russians Alexander Skvortsov and Oleg Artemiev spent more than seven hours outside, longer than expected, and put in an order for hot tea as the tiring work wrapped up.

The two struggled with balky clamps and latches on the antenna as the spacewalk got underway. Mission Control outside Moscow urged them to take frequent breaks, as they panted and sighed.

"Resting is most important," Mission Control radioed in Russian.

Two of the three locks clicked into place on the antenna. But the third would not work right, and the astronauts had to use a wire tie instead. Each spacewalker tugged on the tie to tighten it. With that finally complete, the two successfully made a series of connections, eliciting a "Hurrah!"

"Slowly but surely," one of the astronauts said.

The first-time spacewalkers also struggled to remove an old frame from the Russian side of the space station, once used to hold experiments. Stiff bolts slowed the men down.

"I would like to have a third arm," noted one of the spacewalkers as the work wrapped up.

Mission Control urged Skvortsov and Artemiev to hurry as they wiped down their suits before going back inside.



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"I'm hungry and thirsty," one spacewalker radioed. They also said their hands were tired.

A plastic handle, part of a push rod, got away from them right before they closed the hatch.

The four astronauts inside monitored the action, while doing their own work.

"Pretty neat up here right now," U.S. astronaut Reid Wiseman said via Twitter. "Two Russian crew mates are spacewalking but business as usual for me and @astro_alex," he said, referring to German Alexander Gerst.

The crew includes three Russians, two Americans and the one German. The Americans are supposed to venture out on NASA-led spacewalks in August. Skvortsov and Artemiev also have another spacewalk scheduled for August.

More information: NASA:

www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/main/index.html

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