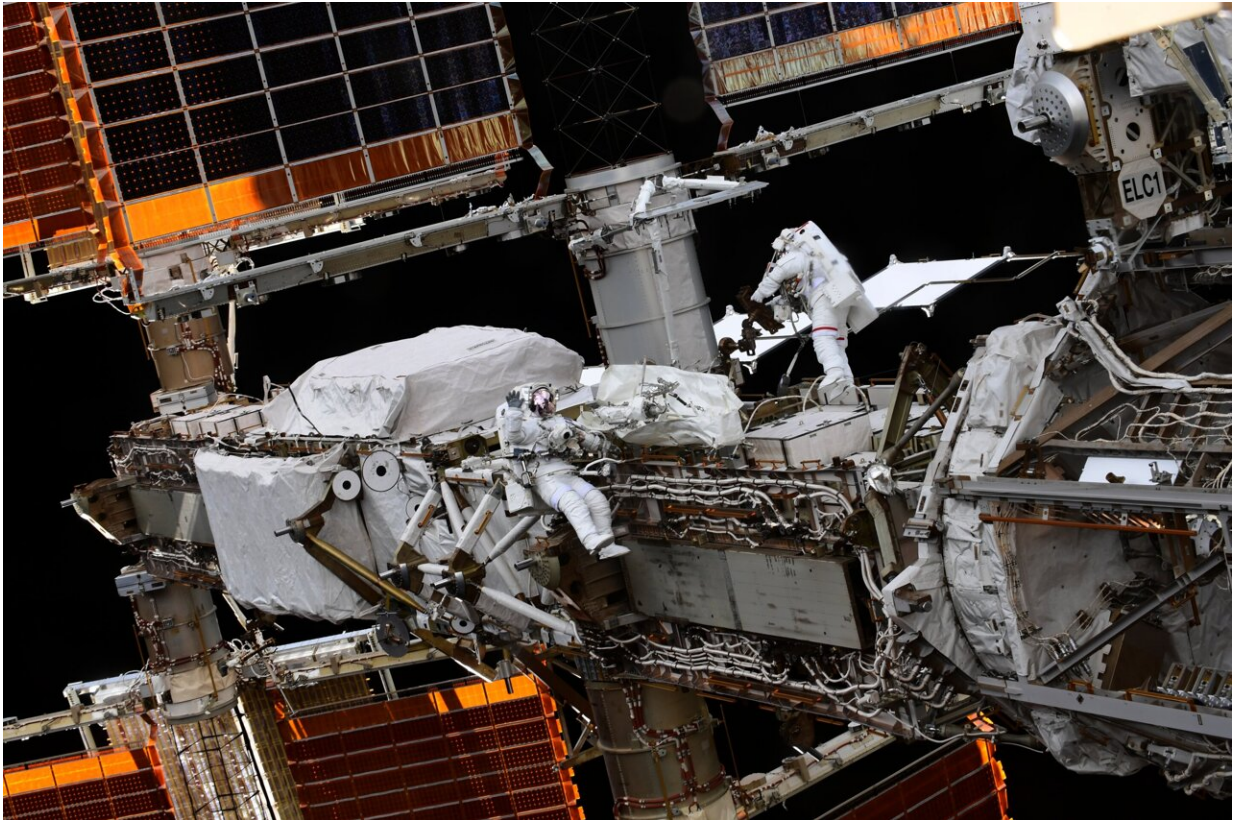


Image: Space men at work

September 15 2021



Credit: NASA

If you are spacewalking and you know it, raise your hand.

ESA astronaut Thomas Pesquet (left) and JAXA astronaut Aki Hoshide (right) performed a spacewalk on Sunday 12 September to prepare another section of the International Space Station for its solar panel

upgrade.

The new solar arrays, called IROSA or ISS Roll-Out Solar Array, are being gradually installed over the existing arrays to boost the International Space Station's power system.

Thomas and NASA astronaut Shane Kimbrough prepared and installed two IROSA solar panels across three spacewalks in June. The arrays were taken from their storage area outside the Space Station and passed from spacewalker to spacewalker to the worksite. There the rolled arrays were secured, unfolded, connected and then unfurled.

Aki and Thomas prepared the P4 truss for its IROSA installation. This is the same area as where Thomas and Shane installed two IROSA's but closer to the main body of the Space Station, in an area called the 4A channel. Only one new [solar array](#) will be installed here, on a later spacewalk.

While Sunday's extravehicular activity or EVA was already the fourth spacewalk during Thomas' Alpha mission, it was his first with Aki and the first time a spacewalking pair did not feature a US or Russian astronaut.

Aki and Thomas made good time preparing the 4A channel for the next IROSA and were able to complete a second task to replace a floating potential measurement unit that was faulty. This unit measures the difference between the Space Station's conductive structures and the atmospheric plasma.

Thomas and Aki completed their [spacewalk](#) in six hours and 54 minutes, which hands Thomas the ESA record for longest time spent spacewalking.

How did he celebrate? With ice cream!

Thomas reminds us that, "Spacewalks last seven hours and are like top sport, so we need the calories afterwards!"

As this image shows, the International Space Station is a huge, complex spacecraft. Built by international partners and in operation for over 20 years now, the only human outpost in [space](#) (so far!) is a sight to behold and requires spacewalks to maintain.

But as Thomas notes, fixing up the Space Station is not just a maintenance job, it is also "improving the [station](#) and what it stands for."

Provided by European Space Agency

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