

Two Russian astronauts step outside space station

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Russian cosmonaut Sergei Volkov participates in a session of extravehicular activity (EVA) on the Russian segment of the International Space Station (ISS) in 2011. Two Russian cosmonauts stepped out of the International Space Station on Thursday in a spacewalk due to last six hours, Russia's mission control centre said.

(AP) -- Two astronauts aboard the International Space Station are taking a spacewalk.

Russians Oleg Kononenko (Koh-no-NEHN-koh) and Anton Shkaplerov (SHKAP-luh-roff) floated out Thursday, after being held up at the hatch by a balky ring. They will relocate a construction crane on the Russian side of the space station. They also will install shielding on one of the station's oldest compartments to protect against small bits of space junk.

[Space debris](#) is a major threat to the space station. NASA's compartments were launched with armor already in place, while Russia's were not. Station construction wrapped up last year, with the close of the [shuttle program](#).

The station's four other residents - American, Russian and Dutch - monitored the spacewalk from inside.

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