

Russian cosmonaut sets record for most time in space

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Russian cosmonaut Gennady Padalka, who is the current commander of the International Space Station, has set a new record for most time spent in space, with a total of 803 days, Russian space agency said Tuesday.

"The record is official. Gennady Padalka has become the man who spent the most time in space," a spokesman for the Russian federal space agency Roscosmos told AFP.

Padalka, who turned 57 on June 21, is currently on his fifth [space mission](#). Trained as a military pilot during the Soviet era, he first went to space in 1998, when he served as commander on the pre-ISS Mir orbital complex that year.

When Padalka returns to Earth in September with fellow ISS crew members Mikhail Kornienko and Scott Kelly, he will have spent a total of 877 days—or roughly 2.5 years—in space.

He is a veteran spacewalker and was described by a US colleague as the best at training space rookies on how to live in zero gravity.

"If you're a new guy (on the ISS), the guy you want to fly with is Padalka, he's the greatest Obi-Wan ever," astronaut Mike Fincke said in a NASA video, apparently referring to a key character in the Star Wars saga.

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