

Life aboard the ISS (International Space Station)

Eating in Space

Astronauts eat three meals a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Nutritionists ensure the food astronauts eat provides them with a balanced supply of vitamins and minerals. All of these meals are just as delicious as those down on Earth!

Condiments, such as ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise, are provided. However, salt and pepper are only available in a liquid form. This is because astronauts can't sprinkle salt and pepper on their food in space as they would simply float away. There is a danger they could clog air vents, contaminate equipment or get stuck in an astronaut's eyes, mouth or nose.



As on Earth, space food comes in disposable packages. Astronauts must throw their packages away when they have finished eating. Some packaging actually prevents food from flying away. The food packaging is designed to be flexible and easier to use, as well as to maximize space when stowing or disposing of food containers.

Working in Space

Astronauts perform many important tasks as they orbit Earth and the space station is designed to be a permanent orbiting research facility. Its major purpose is to perform world-class science and research that only a microgravity environment can provide. Each day, they make fascinating new discoveries. The station crew spends their day working on science experiments that require their input, as well as monitoring those that are controlled from the ground. They also take part in medical experiments to determine how well their bodies are adjusting to living in microgravity for long periods of time.

Working on the space station also means ensuring the maintenance and health of the orbiting platform. Crew members are constantly checking support systems and cleaning filters, updating computer equipment: doing many of the things homeowners must do to ensure their largest investment stays in good shape. Similarly, the Mission Control Center constantly monitors the space station and sends messages each day through voice or email with new instructions or plans to assist the crew members in their daily routines.

Exercising in Space

Exercise is the most important part of the daily routine for astronauts aboard the station as it prevents bone and muscle loss. On average, astronauts exercise two hours per day. The equipment they use is different than what we use on Earth. Lifting 200 pounds on Earth may be a lot of work. But lifting that same object in space would be much easier. Because of microgravity, it would weigh much less than 200 pounds there. That means exercise equipment needs to be specially designed for use in space so astronauts will receive the workout needed.