

Let's Ask The Experts

What Is Life Aboard The International Space Station Like?

(NAPSA)—What is life like aboard the International Space Station (ISS)? These answers from the crew of the space station will let those here on earth know what it's like up there.

Q. After seeing a video about the ISS I was wondering how cramped does it feel? Does the zero-g environment make it feel less cramped?

A. Actually the ISS has six modules, so it doesn't really feel all that cramped for most day to day activities. When we're all together—for example, during meals, the space we are in is relatively small. But your question is a good one. In zero-g it's possible to be above or below someone else and not feel too crowded. I think it would be more challenging to work and live in the equivalent amount of space on the ground.

Q. Can you tell me something about the chemical or biological experiments in the International Space Station?

A. We have a wide range of experiments involving chemical and biological properties. Things like protein crystal growth of many different types of materials—drugs, proteins involved in disease—don't require a lot of interaction, while experiments like pulmonary function tests that we perform require a lot of crew member participation. We have also done a lot of experiments involving anti-cancer drugs and DNA, using lack of gravity as a variable.

Q. I understand that you do medical measurements on the



SPACE AND CROWDING—It never feels crowded in the space station because in zero gravity it's possible to be above or below someone else.

station. How do you weigh yourself in zero gravity?

A. We weigh ourselves with a Russian-built device called the body mass measuring system. It calculates inertia as it moves a mass back and forth on a calibrated spring. It's a very simple system, but seems to work very well. After we calibrate the spring, we climb on the device and release the spring. Our mass is calculated from the inertial forces on the spring.

Scientists feel that sustained human exploration begins with the ISS. While the Station is permanently crewed, the crews rotate during crew exchange flights. November marks the station's second year.

For more fascinating facts on the International Space Station, visit <http://spaceflight.nasa.gov>.