

SPACE SCOOP

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British Astronaut Blasts Off to International Space Station

16 grudnia 2015

Our planet is wrapped in a metal shield made up of thousands of orbiting satellites. Each satellite has its own important job, from beaming phone calls across to the world to predicting the weather. But one is particularly special – the International Space Station is the largest human-made satellite and it's the only satellite that people can live on!

The International Space Station (often called the ISS) can host up to ten people at once. There are currently six people living and working on this orbiting laboratory. One of those lucky six is Major Tim Peake, the first British person in space for over 20 years!

Just yesterday, Tim was strapped tightly into a Soyuz spacecraft and blasted into space. After a nail-biting eight-hour flight, the spacecraft arrived at the ISS. There were a few problems upon arrival, and the docking was tense, but thanks to the talented crew Tim arrived smiling at the station safely.

Now the hard work really begins for Tim. Over the next six-months he will work on his personal mission called Principia, named after the work of the famous British scientist Isaac Newton who discovered gravity.

As part of his important mission Tim will carry out dozens of experiments for researchers on Earth, such as growing blood vessels in space, looking at how the brain adapts to stressful situations, and trying to make new types of metal.

Tim will also be testing out the technology that will help us explore the Solar System in the future, by controlling robots on Earth from orbit! The technology could be used to drive robots around the surface of Mars while astronauts are orbiting the Red Planet!

▲ COOL FACT!

If you think it's hard to stay in shape on Earth, try keeping fit in zero gravity. When you never have to stand up or lift anything, it can be very difficult. To keep healthy Tim Peake plans to run a marathon while on-board the ISS (that's 42 kilometres!).