

Five space walks, mock repairs planned for Discovery

US space shuttle Discovery plans a full schedule of five space walks on its next mission to the International Space Station (ISS), set to begin Oct 23, NASA officials said.

Discovery's crew is to bring up and install the Harmony module to serve as a port for additional international laboratories constructed in Japan, Germany and elsewhere.

But NASA officials said Friday they expect to add a fifth space walk to test some new repair equipment that could be used to fix heat-shield damage that can happen to shuttles during launch, according to spaceflightnow.com.

The so-called T-RAD was due to only be tested next year, but the trial was moved up in light of tile damage discovered during last month's Endeavour shuttle mission to the ISS. Officials at that time decided the damage was not large enough to warrant fixing in space, and Endeavour returned to Earth without a hitch.

Discovery is set to launch from Cape Canaveral, Florida Oct 23 and dock with the ISS two days later.

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