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Surviving Quarantine: 5 Tips From a Russian Cosmonaut

By AFP

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International Space Station Expedition 51 crew members Fyodor Yurchikhin (left) and Col. Jack Fischer take a break during mealtime, April 2017. **Airman Magazine / Flickr**

With more than a third of the global population confined to their homes to slow the coronavirus pandemic, many are worried how long they will be cooped up.

But being quarantined can be "a good thing" and something "to enjoy," says veteran Russian cosmonaut Fyodor Yurchikhin.

The 61-year-old, who has made five flights to space spending a combined 671 days aboard the International Space Station (ISS), says the main thing is to stay positive.

Here are his five tips for surviving quarantine:

Get some air

On the ISS, cosmonauts work "in an alien environment, surrounded by metal and plastic," Yurchikhin told AFP.

"There are no trees and no plants — except for the ones used for experiments, but we treat it as if it were our home.

"But you guys, you're really home!

"Remember that in space, it's really impossible to get out" or take some air. At home, you can always open the windows or step out onto the balcony, the cosmonaut says.

Call friends

"Remember you have relatives and friends you haven't called for centuries because you were too busy."

Why not get in the habit of calling them every day, when you're in confinement, Yurchikhin said.

"This is the perfect time to catch up with your friends."

Family time

Yurchikhin urges those in quarantine to use this time to "establish a completely different style of communication within the family" and to pay more attention to children.

Now is a good moment to check off items on the to-do list: finally hang a painting on the wall, sort through archives or read a book.

"Take care of this today, because when the quarantine is over, you won't get round to it again!" he urged.

Get some exercise

And "Don't forget your health!" he says.

You can let spending all day in an enclosed space impact your fitness, says Yurchikhin. "That's why you should do sport."

You do not need a gym membership to work out "at least twice a day for 30 minutes." With many yoga or aerobics courses available online, "you can do it at home," he says.

Laugh it off

"If you only see the bad side of quarantine, it will feel like prison," Yurchikhin said.

"So approach this situation with humor.

"Humor should prolong life and shorten quarantine."

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