



NASA Astronaut

Dan Tani

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00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:18,770

\h Music.

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00:00:18,770 --> 00:00:23,270

\h What made you want to become an astronaut?

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00:00:23,270 --> 00:00:27,430

\h I thought aviation was incredibly exciting and I liked model rockets.

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00:00:27,430 --> 00:00:30,940

\h I used to fly model rockets when I was in elementary school.

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00:00:30,940 --> 00:00:35,070

\h Just making stuff go fast and high was really exciting. Of course,

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00:00:35,070 --> 00:00:37,170

\h if you would have asked me if I wanted to be an astronaut,

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00:00:37,170 --> 00:00:41,480

\h I would have said absolutely, but it wasn't something I carried as a goal since childhood.

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00:00:41,480 --> 00:00:46,910

\h And then in college I became an engineer and learned how stuff works,

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00:00:46,910 --> 00:00:52,740

\h how to build things and I got a job in an aerospace company and we were building satellites and satellites

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00:00:52,740 --> 00:00:58,800

\h and I got to meet a few astronauts and when I met them I realized, hey,

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00:00:58,800 --> 00:01:03,300

\h it's a job and I never even thought of being an astronaut as a job.

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00:01:03,300 --> 00:01:07,650

\h And then I heard they were taking applications for that job, so I thought,

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00:01:07,650 --> 00:01:13,250

\h who doesn't want to be an astronaut? Everybody wants to be an astronaut in my mind. So, got the appli

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00:01:13,250 --> 00:01:17,000

\h filled it in, mailed it off and almost forgot about it.

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00:01:17,000 --> 00:01:20,760

\h I just felt like I bought the lottery ticket, stuck it in my pocket and forgot about it.

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00:01:20,760 --> 00:01:24,460

\h I was really surprised when they gave me a call and asked me if I wanted to interview

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00:01:24,460 --> 00:01:29,520

\h and equally surprised when I got selected for the class of '96.

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00:01:29,520 --> 00:01:34,630

\h What is astronaut training like?

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00:01:34,630 --> 00:01:40,630

\h It's fun. We sort of go back to school. For the first two years we're called astronaut candidates,

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00:01:40,630 --> 00:01:46,840

\h or ASCANs for short and ASCAN training is learning everything you can about NASA so we go to all the

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00:01:46,840 --> 00:01:52,640

\h we learn about what they do. It's all about learning how the space station works,

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00:01:52,640 --> 00:01:57,550

\h when I joined it was all about learning how the space shuttle works and then it's about all the skills

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00:01:57,550 --> 00:02:03,390

\h you're going to need as an astronaut, so some robotics skills and some spacewalking skills

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00:02:03,390 --> 00:02:07,980

\h and some fix-it skills and some speaking skills.

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00:02:07,980 --> 00:02:12,820

\h And so it's sort of going to school for almost two years and then when you come out of it,

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00:02:12,820 --> 00:02:16,350

\h you're an eligible astronaut for assignment and I guess it was four

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00:02:16,350 --> 00:02:18,960

\h years after I joined that I got selected for my first mission.

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00:02:18,960 --> 00:02:23,820

\h What was adapting to space like?

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00:02:23,820 --> 00:02:29,720

\h It felt pretty normal pretty quickly. When we go up on the space shuttle,

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00:02:29,720 --> 00:02:38,650

\h we don't dock until the third day and so that means we have two full days of living in the space shuttle

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00:02:38,650 --> 00:02:42,740

\h to kind of get used to weightlessness, to get used to brushing your teeth in weightlessness,

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00:02:42,740 --> 00:02:47,130

\h putting on your socks, which is comically difficult to do in weightlessness

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00:02:47,130 --> 00:02:53,160

\h and so you've sort of adapted that, doing your everyday stuff in weightlessness.

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00:02:53,160 --> 00:02:56,830

\h Now you get into the station and it's a real benefit, there's just a lot more room.

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00:02:56,830 --> 00:03:02,170

\h The space station is outfitted with lots of computers to provide you some entertainment,

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00:03:02,170 --> 00:03:06,940

\h also some communication with home so you can talk to your family virtually every

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00:03:06,940 --> 00:03:10,090

\h day and so that feels a lot more normal.

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00:03:10,090 --> 00:03:15,930

\h So living on the space station I thought was a very fast adaptation.

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00:03:15,930 --> 00:03:20,030

\h Describe the view from space?

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00:03:20,030 --> 00:03:26,300

\h The two great things about going into space are floating and looking out the window,

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00:03:26,300 --> 00:03:30,980

\h Looking out the window is a spectacular privilege.

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00:03:30,980 --> 00:03:35,870

\h We're two hundred something miles above the Earth, we're going 17,000 mph,

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00:03:35,870 --> 00:03:41,230

\h we cover most of the populated land mass because of the inclination of our orbit.

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00:03:41,230 --> 00:03:46,830

\h To look down at the earth and see both very familiar sights like your hometown and unfamiliar

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00:03:46,830 --> 00:03:49,920

\h sights like the middle of Australia, which is incredibly beautiful,

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00:03:49,920 --> 00:03:58,530

\h that was a motivator every day for space for me. Even out the little window, it was amazing.

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00:03:58,530 --> 00:04:03,900

\h So now you put the helmet on, you put the spacesuit on, you get in the airlock, you close the door behind

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00:04:03,900 --> 00:04:11,610

\h you open the door out into space and now your window has become a full, 180-degree mask view.

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00:04:11,610 --> 00:04:15,960

\h And the thing about spacewalks is we're not out there for the view,

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00:04:15,960 --> 00:04:22,170

\h we're there to do the work and I think every spacewalker would tell you, the view is great,

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00:04:22,170 --> 00:04:28,030

\h we think, my memory of the spacewalks really is what's here and I had to force myself to

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00:04:28,030 --> 00:04:36,430

\h have moments where I would appreciate the setting, the view and take some pictures and remember it t

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00:04:36,430 --> 00:04:39,900

\h It is spectacular. It's amazing to hold onto the International Space Station,

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00:04:39,900 --> 00:04:44,030

\h you're going 17 and a half thousand miles an hour, and hold on and just sort of look down at

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00:04:44,030 --> 00:04:48,200

\h your feet and 200 miles under your feet, there goes the coast of California

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00:04:48,200 --> 00:04:55,200

\h and, oops, nine minutes later, there goes New York City as you're flying over and then on your way to E

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00:04:55,200 --> 00:04:59,870

\h What was the biggest surprise of spaceflight?

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00:04:59,870 --> 00:05:07,450

\h The biggest surprise to me was that when you're in space, with the weightlessness, it is,

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00:05:07,450 --> 00:05:16,380

\h I call weightlessness 75 percent enjoyable, 75 percent unbelievably fun, 25 percent just a pain in the ne

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00:05:16,380 --> 00:05:21,540

\h And the pain the neck aspect is you're used to, on the ground you're used to doing things without thinkin

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00:05:21,540 --> 00:05:23,940

\h you're used to writing something down, putting the pen down.

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00:05:23,940 --> 00:05:27,490

\h The pen stays there, the paper stays there and you can turn around and when you turn back,

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00:05:27,490 --> 00:05:33,030

\h the pen's there, paper's there. Well, since everything floats in space, you have to think about absolutely

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00:05:33,030 --> 00:05:35,790

\h everything you touch and everything that you want to touch.

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00:05:35,790 --> 00:05:42,330

\h When you're eating, in space, you have to, generally people will eat one thing at a time because

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00:05:42,330 --> 00:05:48,610

\h to eat your meat and your potatoes and your drink, you have to hold down, tie down,

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00:05:48,610 --> 00:05:54,050

\h find a fixture for each item between if you're going to pick something new.

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00:05:54,050 --> 00:05:57,900

\h Otherwise you're just juggling stuff and it'll get out of control.

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00:05:57,900 --> 00:06:04,450

\h One of the pleasures of coming back to the ground was not having to think about eating,