

# Mars 500: how realistic is the 'Mission to Mars'?

What is the aim of the experiment? How authentic is it? What is the 'spaceship' like?



By [Andrew Osborn](#)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/journalists/andrew-osborn/>, Moscow

7:00AM GMT 03 Feb 2011

## What is the aim?

To better understand the physical and psychological effects of long-distance space travel on human beings. In particular, scientists want to understand how people cope with the boredom and isolation and to study how the volunteers interact with each other. Even though no country is close to sending a real mission to Mars the idea is to prepare for the day when such a mission can be launched.

## How authentic is the experiment?

With a bit of imagination fairly authentic though there is no zero gravity. The crew's routine is the same as a real crew though. Daily life is strictly regimented: eight hours for sleep, eight hours for work, and eight hours for leisure. They are eating the same rations, carrying out the same kinds of experiments (over one hundred), and can only communicate with mission control via email. The internet functions with a delay of 20 minutes to simulate delays in deep space. Portholes are replicated by TV monitors.

## How long will it last?