

What do you do as a career when you like many different subjects?

How do you combine them into one job?

Ellen Ochoa has built a career that combines her interest in math, physics, engineering, and space. In fact, she believes that math and science can help us explain all of the questions we have about space.

She loves space because she “likes the fact that it is bigger than myself.”



Ellen Ochoa

Astronaut/Electrical Engineer

As a child, Dr. Ochoa was fascinated by space. In college, she studied physics at San Diego State University. Physics is the study of energy and motion. She continued in school, and earned her Master's and Doctoral degrees in electrical engineering from Stanford University. Electrical engineering is the study of machines and electricity. Ochoa used both physics and electrical engineering when she began her career at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). At NASA, scientists work together to help us learn more about space. They also get astronauts safely into

space and back again. Many types of work on many types of systems are needed to make that happen.

Dr. Ochoa developed systems and had many different types of jobs in her work at NASA. Eventually, she became an astronaut. She was the first Hispanic astronaut to go to space. She flew into space four times and spent almost 1,000 hours in space orbit! One of her jobs was developing and operating the computers on space shuttles. Another was assisting in building robotics that were on the spacecraft. Engineering advances have led to amazing technologies used in space. One of Dr. Ochoa's most important jobs was operating a robotic arm from the International Space Station. From inside the space station, she had to use the arm to grab satellites outside the space station and make repairs.



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Dr. Ochoa has received many awards, and she is now in the astronaut hall of fame. Today, Ellen Ochoa is the Director of Astronaut Operations at the Johnson Space Center in Texas. She continues to help astronauts who are in space from here on Earth, but her job is still out of this world!

Works Cited

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