



Patricia Suzanne Cowings

NASA Research Psychologist

Do You Ever Get Sick in the Car, the Airplane or on a Boat? Do You Wish You Could Control It?



Meet Dr. Pat Cowings.

She developed and teaches a training exercise which enables astronauts to control up to twenty different physiological functions - from blood pressure to heart beat and temperature - in order to prevent motion sickness while in space.

The Program

Over her thirty-year career at NASA's Ames Research Center, Dr. Cowings has studied the effects of gravity on human physiology and performance while in space. The Autogenic Feedback Training Exercise, or AFTE which she developed, allows astronauts the ability to psychologically control their reactions and gives them ways to adapt faster to the different environments between Earth and space.



Who is She ?

Patricia Szanne Cowings was born in New York City on December 15, 1948. Both her parents pushed education as very important. As a child growing up, she became interested in psychology as the study of what humans have the ability to do. In college she studied psychology and began working with a professor teaching people how to control brainwave activity. From here she went to graduate school.



How did She Get Started ?

As a graduate student in psychology, at the University of California, Davis, Cowings became involved with space sciences quite by accident. She enrolled in a course offered by the engineering department on space shuttle design. During a class trip to the Ames Research Center, she learned about the biomedical problems of manned spaceflight and thus her interest was piqued. Still a graduate student, she began work at the Ames Center in 1971 and has continued working there ever since.

"Doesn't matter where you are from or what you look like. Doesn't matter if you're poor. A human being can learn and can achieve whatever they set out to do (or come near to it). I've spent my life studying human potential - and stretching my own."

