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## Ready for take off



### California Science Center

DISPLAYING a space shuttle is harder than it may seem – you can't just plunk it down and set up the velvet rope. So, before the shuttle Endeavour (below) can take up residence on its 1600-tonne concrete slab at the California Science Center in Los Angeles, there will be six months of prep.

While the other three shuttles are on show across the US in a horizontal position, Endeavour will be placed in a "ready-to-launch" vertical position, complete with the boosters and tank that would be needed to send it back up to space. Such a stack requires heavy hardware to keep it upright: six seismic isolators to protect it from earthquakes, huge studs made of specialised materials, and some of the strongest cranes out there to stack up the 61 metres of spacecraft.

The first parts lifted in were the aft skirts (one of which is shown in the main image, hanging from the crane), which are the base of the rocket boosters. Next are the boosters, then the enormous fuel tank and, finally, Endeavour itself. The roof of the building will then be built around the shuttle. It won't be time to launch, but it sure will look like it. ■

### Leah Crane

