

## Ten steps to the perfect home-made espresso

---

- 1.** I will first of all assume that you have your own coffee grinder, and with so, you grind your coffee beans yourself. Do you [still] not, then leave the rest of the steps to do what they are, because you can only prepare the perfect espresso with freshly ground beans.



Fill your grinder with coffee beans. Try not to use more beans than you need for the amount of coffee that you are going to drink right now. The quality of the beans is rapidly deteriorating when the beans are exposed to air. This applies also to the beans in your coffee grinder!

- 2.** Make sure your cup is enough warm. Usually, the electric hot plate of the espresso machine doesn't generate sufficient heat to get the cup enough hot. Therefore heat the cups with hot water. Better don't use water from your espresso machine for this. This lowers the water temperature in the device, especially in machines with one boiler. For machines with two boilers, the water -where you heat the cup with- can become actually too hot, and burn the coffee that gets in the cup.

If you do have a good hot plate, put your cups in the middle as much as possible. This is often the hottest area. Place the cups upside down so the heat is better retained. It goes without saying that you better stack the cups.

- 3.** Now dry your cup. Do this before you remove the filter holder out of your espresso machine. This prevents cooling down of your filter holder.

- 4.** Remove the filter holder from your device. Rinse it briefly (no longer than 2 seconds!) with hot water from the device. This is for the holder to clean and flush.

Don't do this too long and with too much water, otherwise the water temperature in your espresso machine will reduce too much. By the way, never store your filter holder next to your device but always in the brewing head. This way it is always warmed up and ready for use.

- 5.** Make your filter holder clean and dry. You don't want to have water around your coffee grinder. First of all to avoid a mess, and secondly because you have to try to keep the air humidity in the vicinity of your coffee beans as stable as possible.

- 6.** Now grind the preferred quantity of beans. No more than strictly necessary to prevent oxidation of the surplus grind. For espresso, use a fine grind. You only know whether the grind is good, when the turnaround time (see step 10) is good.

If you have a coffee grinder with a dosing system [that every time produces a standard quantity of ground coffee in the bunker] then you better switch it off. Because the coffee in the bunker is off course already ground [the last time when you used your grinder]. Ground coffee should really be fresh! Fill your filter holder with 6.5 grams of ground coffee.

- 7.** Divide the coffee in the filter with your finger. Make sure that it is evenly divided, this will improve the extraction. Water naturally chooses the easiest way, and will flow exactly there where it finds the least resistance (thus; the least coffee). You understand that in the case of uneven distribution the coffee cannot get its needed aroma.
- 8.** Press the coffee with your tamper. Make sure you have a good tamper, which exactly fits in your filter holder. With the plastic tamper that sometimes comes with an espresso machine, you can often not provide adequate pressure.



Give **20-25 kg** pressure. Are you afraid that you push too hard or too soft, then just place a scale under your filter holder once. You may find that you often have a tendency to press too hard. Try to learn to recognize the feeling of the correct pressure. You can also purchase a special tamping click mat, which gives a click when you've reached the set pressure.

Press the coffee in two phases. The first time you press with little pressure while circling the tamper a bit back and forth. This creates an even surface. Tap with your tamper lightly a few times against the filter holder for coffee crept up to the middle tap. Press again, this time with 20-25 kg of pressure.

Clean the edges of the filter holder, so it will fit well in the device, and you won't find loose coffee grinds in your cup.

- 9.** Place the filter holder in your device and turn it on immediately! If you wait too long, the high temperature of your machine will burn the coffee. Make sure that your espresso machine is set to provide **30 cc** of coffee in the cup. If you wish, lift the cup a bit [especially if it is a small cup is] to prevent splashes on the edge of your cup.

- 10.** Keep an eye on the turnaround time of the coffee. The ideal turnaround time is **25-28** seconds. Use a stopwatch if necessary! Does it take less time, then your grind is probably too coarse and the coffee will taste weak. Does it take longer, then your grind is too fine and the coffee will taste bitter. In both cases adjust the fineness setting of your coffee grinder.

Finally, check the color of the cr ma layer. In the ideal case this is slightly brown and distributed evenly. The cr ma layer must be strong enough to carry a scoop of sugar for a few seconds.

The perfect espresso smells like fresh roasted coffee beans and gives a 'round' taste in your mouth. You recognize the perfect espresso only after you've tasted one for the first time.

