

3 Easy Ways to Ensure Your Coffee Doesn't Taste Foul

So often we hear our customers complaining: 'Our coffee doesn't taste nice, it is bitter, rancid, rubbery or medicinal. Is my machine running too hot? Why can't I get the same clean, round and enjoyable flavour I used to get before?' And our answer is: 'When was the last time you've backflushed your group head?'

More often than none, the romantic notion of brewing an extraordinary espresso at home like the good barista around the corner takes over other less fun aspects of coffee making at home. The truth is that it isn't a maintenance free hobby. Traditional espresso machines need a lot of TLC to keep pouring out the good stuff, and I never cease to be amazed at how much of an improvement a little scrubbing with a brush can give you. Far too many people neglect cleaning their machines, but if you want the absolute best espresso you can get, you need to take care of that gear!

Today we will focus on 3 **Simple** and **Easy** ways to make sure your machine is taken care of. We will talk about Heat Exchange e61 group head technology, but most of it is applicable for all commercially oriented semi-auto domestic machines with a pressure release valve. Not sure if its applicable to your machine? [Contact us](#) to find out more.

The 3 most important factors affecting the quality of your coffee (apart from the [grinder](#) you use, the [beans](#) in the hopper and your [coffee making skills](#)) are:

- External maintenance of group handles, group head, baskets ,screens, steam arms & jugs
- Internal maintenance of the boiler, coffee pipes and other tear & wear parts
- The quality of the water entering the machine

1. External Maintenance

Any machine with a release pressure valve will direct all the built up pressure into the drip tray, which will result in a fast increase of what we call "coffee gunk" in and around the grouphead and dispersion screen.



After a few weeks, it can get pretty nasty, even if you backflush regularly. So you need to clean and maintain the grouphead and dispersion screen not to end up with the coffee gunk in your cup.

Daily

1. **Clean the steam wand:** after the last coffee, wrap a wet cloth around the steam arm to soften any milk residue. Clean the residue off with a [soft wet cloth](#). Turn on the steam to ensure the steam nozzle holes are clear; if not, clean them out with your [Coffee Tool](#) poker.
2. **Clean the handle:** remove the handles, empty the grounds, flush hot water through the filters and wipe with a clean cloth
3. **Backwash the group head with water:** remove the filter basket from the handle, insert the [blind filter](#), lock the handle with the blind filter in place, press the coffee button (or pull the lever handle up) and let it run for five seconds. Repeat the above process five times.
4. **Clean the surface:** remove the drip tray, empty it, rinse and dry clean. Replace the filter basket in the handle. Wipe all surfaces with a [clean damp](#) cloth and then with a [dry cloth](#).



Once a week

Use the [Coffee Tool](#) brush to brush out the coffee residue from the inside of the group head



Once a month (or every 1 kg of coffee, whichever comes first)

1. Repeat steps 1-2
2. Place a quarter of teaspoon of [backflush powder](#) in the blind filter and dissolve it with a little hot water.

1. Press the coffee button (or pull the handle up) and let it run for five seconds then wait for five seconds. Repeat five times.
2. Remove blind filter from the handle, soak all your handles and baskets in a container with hot water and [backflush powder](#) for at least one hour to clean the coffee oils away. (One teaspoon to 500ml of water approximately - ensuring the filters, baskets and metal handle surfaces are covered)
3. Replace the blind filter in the handle and perform point 2 with clean water to flush detergent residue from the machine



Once Every 3 Months

It is good to remove the shower screen of your E61 group head once in a while to be able to remove all residue built up on the screen and allow access to your Coffee Tool brush even deeper inside the head.

Use flat head screw driver to release the shower screen tucked in the group head. Soak it with all other metal parts after backflushing.



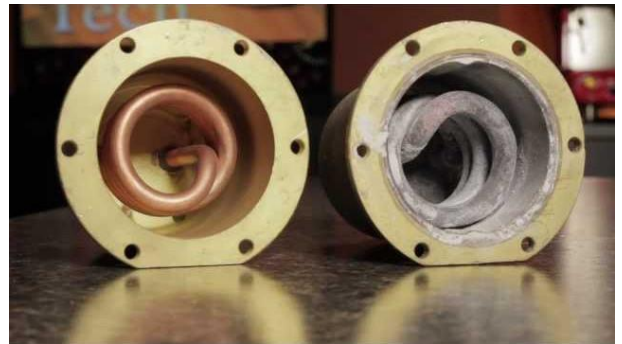
2. Internal Maintenance

It is important to keep a regular regime of general service to your machine. We recommend general service every 18 months, more frequent if you are a heavy entertainer and do not use filtered water at home. If you haven't purchased it from Di Bartoli or you live outside Sydney, [contact us](#) to find out where is your nearest certified Technician.

While in service, your machine will undergo a thorough check to ensure it is cleaned, descaled, worn out parts replaced and it was tested for pressure and temperature. Click [here](#) to find out more about our services. In certain cases where the customer lives in a remote area far away from any technician, or if they are unable to transport the machine to the workshop, we will provide you with a DIY kit and some guidance on how to perform a light servicing yourself at home. [Contact us](#) for DIY service advice.

3. Use Only Filtered (Soft) Water with your Espresso Machine

Lime scale is the biggest enemy of all coffee machines. Frequently seen in large quantities in our workshop with machines having normal tap water used with it. 95% of all machines breakdowns can be attributed to scale build up as it gets everywhere inside the boiler, the coffee and water pipes, in the pump, in the group head, coating the heating element and gets on top of other components like solenoids, lever shafts, and gauges.



Using normal tap water will shorten the life expectancy of your machine, will require a more frequent servicing and will increase dramatically your repair bill thoroughly the machine's life. Not to mention impact significantly the taste of your coffee.

True, tap water hardness varies in Australia, between the city to the country side and even in difference suburbs of the same city. We recommend using our [Water Hardness Stripes](#) to test the hardness of your tap water and help you choosing the correct solution.

Few widely available water filtration solutions like the Brita counter top jugs will only remove a small percentage of the scale and in fact are partially effective. The best solution we see nowadays in the market for domestic usage with a coffee machine is the [Digi Pure](#) that has been designed specifically not only to deliver soft water for all domestic electrical appliances using water but also deliver clean and tasty water for all your cooking / drinking purposes. Just remember to change the [cartridge](#) every 12 months or when the digital counter is low.



We have a range of water filtration solutions for your plumed-in machine. Browse online or ring us for the best solution for you.

Descaling isn't required often with Prosumer level machines, providing you use filtered water and that you service your machines regularly, as we will descale it for you. However if your machine employs an aluminum boiler like the Gaggia Classis you will need to [descal](#) it yourself every few months or follow up the manufacture instruction for frequency if your machine is fully automatic.