

Achieving the perfect coffee

Dosing and the shot:

Firstly, you are encouraged to maintain a consistent dosing technique. With a machine such as the ECM Giotto, which has a high shower screen, tap the (double) portafilter on the bench a few times as you fill it to settle off the coffee. Make a small mound of coffee and brush off using a straight edge- or even the side of your index finger to get a totally full basket. Then, just sit a (heavyish) tamper on the coffee to settle it, fill and brush off again.... and then tamp to 15kg or thereabouts. This will enable you to get your dosing consistent. If you find that the portafilter is hard to load, you're overdoing it for your particular machine- back off just a fraction by altering your technique a little but do so consistently. Whatever you do **MUST** be repeatable.

Run a shot to see how things are going. A pour of approximately 30ml in approx 25 sec is a good starting point. Check the puck to see that it is not wet and sloppy- if it is, your dose is poor the coffee will be bad. If you see holes in the puck, these are channels and will usually result in an unsatisfactory shot.

Taste the espresso and note where on your tongue you taste it- if it's towards the front, the coffee is sour and your grind is probably too coarse, if towards the back, the coffee is bitter and your grind is too fine. NEVER make a grind adjustment until you are certain that you have removed yourself as the source of the error.

Adjust the grind to balance the coffee on your tongue- Imagine a see-saw with sour at one end and bitter at the other. With a Giotto and its built-in pre-extraction, I tend to look for a pour that starts a touch drippy and then comes to a fine, continuous stream. I also cut the shot when I see the first signs of blonding (pale, tertiary extracted coffee).

Milk Texture:

As for milk. We suggest that you fill the jug to just below the base of the spout. Keep the jug vertical and orientate your hands and the jug east-west around the steam wand. We recommend that you rest the back of the jug against the back of the wand to ensure that when you begin texturing you have support. There should be no need to tilt the jug.

Apply good steam pressure to ensure that you create a whirlpool or **SWIRL**- this should throughout the entire texture event. You need to imagine that your jug is a bucket and that the wand is a hose- make the water (milk) swirl by keeping the wand towards the edge of the jug- you should be able to do this so long as the wand is not in the middle of the milk.

Within reason, the faster the swirl, the better.

The swirl should be accompanied by a gentle hissing sound. If your jug is screaming, you have the wand too far into the milk- lower the jug until you hear good sounds.!

Once the swirl is established, you can create varying amounts of foam by varying the amount that you lower the jug I call this the **STRETCH**- more for a cappuccino, less for a coffee latte and very little for a flat white. You will get the feel of the stretch quite quickly and will find that if you pour the drink which needs more microfoam first, you won't need a spoon.

Keep a hand on the jug- when it's too hot (unbearable) to touch, you should stop the texture event.

There should be no need to further immerse the wand with this technique. Remember that the milk is like an egg- it will set and harden- so have your shot running or completed if required before you texture your milk.

Once the texture event is complete, keep the milk busy- I try to keep the milk swirling in the jug to **POLISH** it and keep it glossy and pourable. It's ok to tap gently on a bench to remove residual bubbles if you slipped when you were working... Good barista technique involves rinsing whatever you use before and after- so do this with wand and with the group. They should come first- before you pour milk..

Happy coffee making!

