

Backflushing and Cleaning a Lever Style Espresso Machine

Cleaning the brew head on the lever style machines is necessary for optimal taste and brewing pleasure. This involves a two part process; backflushing and the cleaning of the brewing surfaces. Let's begin with the backflushing.

Backflushing lever machines in a non-commercial environment should be done, under normal use conditions, every 10 days to two weeks. To prepare for a backflush cycle, your machine must be up to brew temperature and pressure.

The steps to backflushing are as follows:

1. Replace the basket in your portafilter handle with the blind filter basket. The best disks are made of steel and look just like a coffee basket with no holes. Some blind filters are a rubber disk that should be placed at the bottom of the double shot filter basket to cover all of the holes. Lock the portafilter, with the blind filter basket or rubber disk, into the machine.

The lever on your machine has 3 positions.

- A. The up (horizontal) position turns the pump on.
- B. The middle position, (about 45 degrees) turns the pump off.
- C. The down position, (vertical) depressurizes the system. This position is used at the end of every brew cycle to depressurize the system before you can remove the portafilter handle, and allows for relieving of backflush pressure. It is also the normal resting position for the lever when the espresso machine is not in use.

2. Lift the brew lever to the top position for about 5-10 seconds. If you listen carefully to the pump, you will notice an audible change in pitch as the machine becomes pressurized. This change in pitch is the point at which you should turn the lever to the down position.
3. You will notice a pressurized stream of water released into the drip tray a moment after you turn the lever to the down position. This is the backpressure release, or the backflush. Check the water in the drip tray. Is it dirty? If so, then repeat the process until the water released is clean.
4. It is recommended that you should backflush with a detergent occasionally. We recommend Urnex Cafiza. Add 1 teaspoon of the espresso machine cleaner to the shot basket for the first "cycle". The cleaner will appear foamy when it exits from the bottom of the group. It may take 5 cycles or more to completely clean the machine.

Cleaning the brewing surfaces on the lever machines is done as follows:

The cleaning of the brew head should be done while the machine is cold to avoid burns.

1. First you must remove the shower screen on your machine. The shower screen is located at the same place the portafilter installs into the machine. Using a flat

head screwdriver, wiggle the screen out. You will have to work a little on one side, then the other to get the screen out. The screen and gasket will come out together.



You can see here that there is a small ridge where you should insert your screwdriver and pry the screen off gently

2. Separate the screen from the gasket as the cleaning solution can damage plastic and rubber parts.
3. Mix a solution of the Urnex Cafiza and very hot water in a glass container. Use two tablespoons of the cleaner and fill the container halfway as the solution will foam.
4. Soak the shower screen, shot baskets and portafilter head in the solution for about 10 minutes. Anything metal parts and pieces can be soaked in the cleaner. **Take care not to soak the portafilter handle or gasket. The solution will mark the plastic portion of the handle and decrease the elasticity of the gasket.**
5. After cleaning thoroughly rinse all parts with fresh clean water.
6. Reassemble in reverse order.
7. Make sure that the screen and gasket are secured. Locking the portafilter on the machine tightly a few times can help secure everything in place.