Cleaning The Elektra sixties 1Group Espresso Machine

Neil Jones
July 14, 2003

Cleaning the espresso machine can take from five minutes to half an hour, depending on your experience, diligence, and the machine’s overall use. Daily cleanings should take between five and fifteen minutes, while weekly cleanings should take longer. This document lists the steps that you should go through in cleaning the machine, and provides some helpful tips that will make your life easier and somewhat safer.

The Espresso Bar has several components. From left to right they are the refrigerator that holds the milk, the stainless steel table, the espresso machine, the coffee grinder, the knockout-pan (where the dead coffee goes), and the filter bucket. Underneath the table should be a “cleaning kit” that has a bunch of tools that will help speed things up.

1 Before You Get Started

There are some constraints on how you go about cleaning. If you break these constraints, you can cause plumbing problems or a big mess in the lounge. While these events do not signal the end of the world, they can cause some embarrassment and time on your part as you deal with them.

First, you may not put coffee grounds or particulates in the sink. The sink has a filter that can clog and cause a backup. Solid coffee grounds, for example from the knockout-pan, go in the trash. Liquid coffee grounds, for example from rinsing one of the porto-filters, go into the filter bucket.

Second, cleaning involves water, moving things around, and a large number of paper towels. Please make sure that when you are done cleaning the machine that you do not cause a mess in the lounge.

Third, the filter bucket catches drainage from the espresso machine. The filter bucket should be able to go for 4-5 days (depending on usage) without emptying. The filter itself should be changed every 1-2 weeks. The liquid in the bucket can be dumped into the sink, presuming that there are no gaps or rips in the filter.
2 The Cleaning Kit

The cleaning kit has the following items:

**Large tupperware container** This doubles as the container for the cleaning kit when it is not in use, and the wash basin when it is. Since the sink is restrictive, and you want to avoid washing dishes in the tiny drain of the machine, the tupperware basin provides a buffer.

**Tongs** Many of the metal items, especially the grates, will be hot. Use the tongs to pick them up.

**Sponges** Sponges are for cleaning tops of surfaces and for washing dishes. Don’t use them to wash down the machine.

**Dish towels** These are different than the white towels, and are for drying dishes.

**Glass Wipes** The chrome-plated machine should not be scrubbed. Instead, the guy who installed it said to use windex; these are the same, only more convenient. When you use these, the machine will gleam and sparkle, and cause fear in the natives.

Do not pack up the cleaning kit unless you have dried it off, or else it will get moldy. It goes underneath the counter when you’re done.

3 Periodically Throughout the Day

Check supply levels. Make sure the steaming nozzle is clean. Clean up the worst of the mess on the counter.

4 Washing Dishes

Washing the dishes requires about 10 minutes.

1. Retrieve the cleaning kit from underneath the table.

2. Empty out the tupperware container. This is your wash basin.

3. Fill the tupperware container with water and a bit of soap.\(^1\) Place the basin in the sink so that you don’t splash water everywhere. I find it helpful to put the basin over the sink’s drain, so if some coffee grounds do spill over, they don’t go down the drain.

4. Wash the shot glass, the tiny metal espresso jugs, the spoon, and any dirty demitasse cups in the wash basin using the sponge.

---

\(^1\)There is no hot water in the lounge, so to get warm wash water, fill the basin about halfway with cold water from the tap, then use a bit of hot water from the machine.
5. Rinse and dry.

6. While the top of the machine is clear, remove the top grate and rinse into the basin. Clean off as many grounds as you can from the top of the machine. You can polish both the grate and the top of the machine with glass wipes if you want.

7. Dump out the grounds from the knockout-pan into the trash and wash it in the basin.

8. Replace the grate and put all the dishes back on top of the machine.

9. Dump dishwater from the basin into the filter bucket slowly, taking care not to overflow the filter reservoir.

10. Pack up the cleaning kit.

5 Cleaning the Bar

Cleaning the bar entails wiping down the counter, and straightening up.

1. Brush off any coffee grounds into your hand (not onto the floor) and dump into trash.

2. Wipe down the countertop.

3. Put away the chocolate syrup if it’s out.

4. Detach the plastic bottom tray of the grinder, brush into trash or knockout pan.

5. Be sure to replace the knockout pan and anything else to its canonical position.

6 Daily Cleaning of the Machine

Water spots and splatters can be cleaned off the machine only with the Glass Wipes. The basic daily cleaning should take only five minutes, but a more thorough one can require fifteen or twenty.

1. Check supply levels. If we’re running out of anything, let the appropriate person know.

2. Rinse the portofilters with hot water.

3. Empty and wash the milk pitchers. You can do this in the sink without the basin.

4. Wash the thermometers. Remember to put the thermometers back in the pitchers, and the pitchers back in the refrigerator.
5. Remove the filter from the single shot portafilter. You can use the spoon to gently pry the filter from the handle. Do not use your fingernails, because you are likely to lose one (fingernail) this way. Wash and rinse the filters in the basin.

6. With the angled wire brush, clean out the flange and screen in the espresso spigot where the coffee grounds accrue.

7. Flush the spigot with water from the K-button.

8. Clean the steaming nozzle carefully.

9. Take a blank, put into one of the filter handles, and put into machine.

10. Backwash the machine for 10 seconds. Turn machine off for 3 seconds to allow to drain. Repeat for a total of five times.


12. Lift bottom grate with tongs. With paper towel, wipe the grate off into the trash.

13. Lift bottom pan. Pour residual liquid into filter bucket.

14. Use a paper towel to remove the water from the coffee-grounds trap.

15. Use a paper towel to remove as many grounds as you can from the trap. You won’t get all of them.

16. Replace the bottom pan and grate.

17. Turn off machine

18. Any rags that are too dirty to use the next day should be put in the dirty rag bag. When we’re down to a couple of rags, it’s laundry time.

19. Perform the tasks for Cleaning the Bar.


7 Weekly Cleaning of the Machine

When cleaning the machine, work from the top to the bottom. The main difference between daily and weekly cleaning is that you perform 3 backflushes and make sure all the dishes are clean. The weekly cleaning should restore the machine nearly to the state it was in when we bought it. This will take 20-30 minutes, but will prevent a larger quantity of work later.

1. Make yourself a mocha, or hot chocolate, or latte with the leftover milk in the pitchers. When you do this, also check the milk inventory. Besides getting a free mocha, you also make sure the machine is in a known state before you start.
2. Perform the steps in Wash the Dishes


4. Take filters out of portafilter handles and place in steaming pitcher. Add ≈ 1 tsp of purocaff. Cover in hot water from machine. Steam with steaming wand until nearly boiling. Let soak for 10 minutes. Empty and rinse pitcher, rinse filters, dry.

5. Perform the steps in Cleaning the Bar.

6. Move the coffee grinder and clean the counter underneath it. Make sure the counter does not have coffee grounds or water spots on it.

7. Wipe down the refrigerator, outside and in. Remove any spilled milk.

8. Dump liquid from filter bucket into sink (remove filter collector first).

9. If necessary, perform steps in Change Bucket Filter.

10. Sign your name in the log book.

11. Take dirty rags home and wash them if necessary.

12. Enjoy your mocha.

8 Change Bucket Filter

This is easy but annoying. It should only need doing every 1-2 weeks. The filter that I am currently using consists of two Kleenex Viva towels, which are high-strength paper towels. The pore size on the towels is small enough to filter out coffee goo and oil globules that can clog the drain.

The filter consists of a colander, a vegetable steamer basket, and the filter medium. The colander fits perfectly into the mouth of a 16-quart enamel stockpot. The steamer basket serves as a way to both provide a better shape for the filter medium and to provide a buffer space between the colander and the filter medium; if you see grounds or goo on the bottom of the colander, it means that the filter did not work.

1. Remove the filter colander. Throw away the filter.

2. Take 2 new Viva towels, and get them sopping wet under the sink.

3. Place filter colander in the sink.

4. Place 1 Viva towel in the colander so that it lies flat against the sides of the colander and the floor of the steamer basket.
5. Place the other towel at a right angle to the first so that all pores of the colander are covered. Try to eliminate folds where possible.

6. Replace filter colander into stockpot.

7. Replace stockpot under machine, and place the hose into the filter colander so that the hose is resting on the filter.