

ONLINE COURSE

BARISTA FOUNDATION

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LESSON 4: BARISTA WORKFLOW AND ERGONOMICS

Being a good barista isn't just about making great coffee, it's also about making coffee efficiently, cleanly, and safely.

If you're constantly backtracking, reaching over yourself, or juggling clutter, you'll get slower, sloppier, and more stressed especially during peak hours.

Organising Your Workstation

Behind the bar, we usually divide the workstation into three key zones:

1. COFFEE ZONE

This is where your grinder, espresso machine, scale, and tamper live. It's where you prepare espresso. Everything should be positioned so you can move from grinding to dosing to brewing in one smooth motion.

2. MILK ZONE

This includes your milk jugs, steam wand, cloth and fridge. Ideally, this is set up just to the side of your espresso machine so you can pivot easily from brewing to steaming.

3. SERVICE ZONE

Cups, saucers, spoons, lids, napkins and all your customer-facing items live here. You want this area clean, well-stocked, and accessible, especially when drinks are ready to be served.



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LESSON 4:

Key Workflow Principles

A great barista setup should follow a few simple rules:

- **Minimise movement.** Every step you take adds time. Tools should be within arm's reach.
- **Use your dominant hand.** Place tools where your strongest hand can access them quickly. For example, if you're right-handed, your grinder and tamper should be on the right.
- **Separate cloth.** Always have different cloths for wiping the steam wand, drying the portafilter, and cleaning counters. Never mix them.
- **Keep tools in place.** Always return tools to the same spot. This makes you faster and avoids confusion during busy service.
- **Avoid cross-contamination.** For hygiene and food safety, keep milk, coffee, and water stations clean and clearly divided.

At a high-volume café, efficiency isn't just nice to have, it's essential. But even at home, a good workflow makes brewing more enjoyable.

Example: Shot to Steam

Here's a typical movement flow:

1. Grind into portafilter
2. Tamp and insert into group head
3. Start shot
4. While espresso is brewing, steam milk
5. Pour and serve



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HOMEWORK

1. Set up a mini workstation at home. Even if you just have a French press and kettle, lay out your tools using the three zones: coffee, milk (if applicable), and service.
2. Brew your coffee and observe:
 - Did anything feel awkward or cluttered?
 - Did you have to cross over or move tools around unnecessarily?
 - Could you improve your layout?
3. Adjust your setup based on what you noticed. Taking a photo if it helps this kind of visual feedback can also be really useful.

Write a quick reflection on what you changed and how it felt.



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