

ONLINE COURSE

BARISTA INTERMEDIATE

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LESSON 4: ADVANCED ESPRESSO TECHNIQUES

What Does “Dialling In” Really Mean?

Dialling in is the process of adjusting variables to make sure that recipe produces the flavour you want.

- o **Grind size** – Fine or coarse adjustments to control flow rate.
- o **Dose** – Adjusting the amount of coffee in the basket to influence brew ratio, mouthfeel, strength and extraction.
- o **Brew temperature** – Using the machine’s temperature settings to highlight sweetness or balance acidity.
- o **Brew time** – Understanding how contact time affects flavour.

You should definitely make one change at a time. If you adjust grind size and dose simultaneously, it is hard to know which change caused the result.

Grind Size and Its Role in Flavour

- o **Finer grind** – Slows extraction, generally increases body, and can highlight sweetness, but can also risk bitterness if too fine.
- o **Coarser grind** – Speeds extraction, can highlight acidity, but may produce sourness if too coarse.

Environmental factors such as humidity and temperature can affect grind size. In humid weather, coffee can swell slightly, requiring a slightly coarser grind.



LESSON 4:

Temperature Adjustments

Most espresso is brewed at around 92–94°C, but adjusting the temperature slightly can change the flavour:

- o Lower temperatures (90–91°C) can soften sharp acidity and make espresso smoother.
- o Higher temperatures (94–96°C) can bring out more body and sweetness, but can risk bitterness if overdone.

You should note that dark roasts often do better at slightly lower temperatures to avoid extracting bitter compounds too quickly.

Troubleshooting Under- and Over-Extraction

- o **Under-extraction signs:** Sourness, thin body, sharp acidity, lack of sweetness.
- o **Causes:** Grind too coarse, brew ratio too low (sour), brew ratio too high (watery) water temperature too low, shot too fast.
- o **Fix:** Finer grind, slightly higher dose, increase brew temperature.
- o **Over-extraction signs:** Bitterness, dryness, hollow flavours, harsh aftertaste.
- o **Causes:** Grind too fine, brew ratio too high, water temperature too high, shot too slow.
- o **Fix:** Coarser grind, slightly lower dose, lower brew temperature.



HOMEWORK

ADVANCED DIALLING IN

- o Choose a coffee you have not brewed before.
- o Start with your standard recipe (for example, 18g in, 36g out, 28 seconds).
- o Taste and evaluate. Is it balanced, too sour, or too bitter?
- o Adjust only one variable at a time and retest.
- o Record your changes and results in a brew log.

