

# AI-03406 Espresso Bottomless Portafilter

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Tags	Problem
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I bought an bottomless porta filter with round fine screen filter for my barista express Breville espresso. Help figure out the settings and how to use it. When I first use it, La crema was not forming and water/coffee splashing all over like a high water pressure hose, I thump and grind as normal. Explain the phenomenon.

## Quick Answer:

Your bottomless portafilter is exposing *channeling*—uneven water flow through the puck caused by grind size, distribution, or tamping issues. Instead of forming crema, water finds weak spots and sprays out violently. This isn't a machine defect; it's feedback that your puck prep needs refinement. [Crema Coffee Products](#) [artisangrind.com](https://artisangrind.com)

## Why It's Happening

- **Bottomless portafilter = diagnostic tool**

Unlike spouted portafilters, bottomless ones show you exactly how water exits the puck. If it sprays, that means water is finding cracks or weak spots.

[Crema Coffee Products](#)

- **Channeling**

Water under pressure follows the path of least resistance. If your grind is uneven, tamp isn't level, or grounds are clumped, water tunnels through, causing spurts and splashing. [Crema Coffee Products](#)

- **No crema**

Crema depends on proper extraction: fresh beans, correct grind, and balanced pressure. If channeling dominates, the shot is under-extracted in some areas and over-extracted in others, leaving you with thin coffee and no crema. [artisangrind.com](http://artisangrind.com)

## Key Settings & Technique Adjustments

Factor	What's Happening	How to Fix
<b>Grind size</b>	Too coarse → fast flow, no crema. Too fine → clogs, uneven spray.	Aim for fine but not powdery. Adjust until shot time is ~25–30 sec for 18–20g dose.
<b>Dose</b>	Under-dosing leaves headspace → water disrupts puck.	Use 18–20g in double basket. Weigh beans for consistency.
<b>Distribution</b>	Clumps or uneven grounds → weak spots.	Use a distribution tool or tap gently to level before tamping.
<b>Tamping</b>	Uneven tamp = tilted water path.	Tamp firmly (30 lbs pressure) and keep level.
<b>Beans</b>	Old beans = less crema.	Use fresh beans roasted within 2–4 weeks.
<b>Pre-infusion</b>	Breville has pre-infusion to wet puck gently.	Enable it to reduce channeling.

## Practical Steps

1. **Grind finer than usual**—bottomless portafilters demand precision.
2. **Weigh your dose**—consistency matters more than eyeballing.
3. **Distribute evenly**—consider a WDT (Weiss Distribution Technique) tool to break clumps.
4. **Tamp level**—don't thump too hard; focus on evenness.
5. **Watch the shot**—you want a single, honey-like stream forming in the center.
6. **Adjust one variable at a time**—grind, dose, tamp, or beans—so you know what changed.

## Risks & Trade-Offs

- **Messy counter:** Spurting is normal when learning; keep a towel handy.
  - **Frustration:** Bottomless portafilters are unforgiving but accelerate skill improvement.
  - **Bean variability:** Different roasts require different grind/tamp adjustments.
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Bottomless portafilters are like a truth serum for espresso technique—they reveal flaws that spouted portafilters hide. Once you dial in grind, dose, and tamp, you'll see that beautiful golden crema form in a smooth stream.

Would you like me to walk you through a *step-by-step dialing-in routine* for your Breville Barista Express so you can systematically eliminate channeling?