



Frequently Asked Questions | Ascaso STEEL DUO

Can I steam and brew at the same time?

Yes, this machine has two thermoblocks, and one is dedicated to the steam wand. This allows the brew head and steam wand to be operated independently.

How long does it take to heat up? How long does it take to be ready to steam?

From cold, this machine takes 1min., 30 sec. to reach brew temperature of 200 degrees. Once the machine has reached operating temp and the pilot light (under 1 Coffees/2 Coffees switch) is constantly illuminated, it takes about 20 sec. for the steam indicator light (located under the steam switch) to be constantly illuminated meaning the machine is ready to steam.

What is a PID?

PID stands for proportional integral derivative. Don't worry, there is not a test so you don't need to remember that. A PID temperature controller is a smart way to control the temperature of your espresso machine. Think of it like cruise control. You set the temp. and the computer automatically keeps the machine as close to that temperature as possible. Even when you are using the machine and it needs to heat water, the PID can keep the temperature very stable without the peaks and valleys of a conventional temperature control thermostat.

What is volumetric control?

This means the amount of water being dispensed from the grouphead is determined by volume. The machine's display will show the amount of time elapsed (in seconds), however, it's showing the amount of time it takes for this volume of water to be dispensed. The flowmeter is the part that measures the amount of water being dispensed.

How is this different from a heat exchanger or boiler machine?

This machine uses two thermoblocks - one to heat water for brewing espresso and one to heat water into steam. The thermoblock provides better temperature stability and is more energy efficient than most boiler systems. The thermoblock for steam dispenses steam at a slightly lower pressure than we would expect from a boiler machine, but certainly enough pressure to get your desired milk consistency, whether it's an extra dry cappuccino or wet paint consistency for latte art.

How do I access the main programming menu?

Press and hold the buttons to the right and the left of the display simultaneously for about 3 seconds. Once the display shows "set up", use the button to the left of the display to scroll through the menu, and use the button to the right of the display to see the options under each parameter on the main menu. To select a parameter, just get the display to the screen showing that parameter, leave it alone for 3 seconds, and it will automatically save.

How do I set the pressure on my machine?

That is quick and easy! Please follow these steps to set the pressure on your machine properly:

1. Turn the machine on, and let it reach full operating temperature
2. With the blank (cleaning) basket in the portafilter, lock the handle in the machine.
3. Locate the OPV adjustment screw to the left of the group head
4. Engage the group by holding the brew switch up or down. After 3 to 5 seconds, the pressure gauge should stop at the set pressure
5. Adjust the OPV screw until that needle points to 11, then release the brew switch
6. Press and hold the brew switch again to verify that the setting is at 11. Repeat steps 4 and 5 if further adjustment is needed.

Once that is done, the pressure on your machine is set. You will want to adjust your grind, dose, and tamp to achieve 9 BAR during extraction.

Why is the machine not showing the right pressure?

The first step is to put the blind portafilter in, activate the brew switch, and see if the pressure gauge reads anything. From there, adjust the OPV per the manual to read 9 bar. If there is no pressure with the blind portafilter in and the OPV adjusted, there is a problem, please contact us. If it shows pressure, the machine is working as designed, please contact us if you have further questions.

How do I program a shot dose?

First, prepare your puck using the same grind size, input dose, and tamp that you will be doing for subsequent shots. Then put the portafilter in the grouphead and engage the brew switch, holding up for the total amount of time it takes to get the correct volume of water for your shot. Once the shot is complete, quickly disengage, then quickly re-engage the switch up once more to "lock-in" the shot dose. To program the "2 coffees" dose, perform the same steps but hold the switch "down" instead of up. You can always pull a shot with a continuous flow (sometimes called a manual shot) by engaging the switch up OR down for the desired amount of time. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** When you program your shot dose, the flowmeter is saving the volume of water being dispensed, not the amount of time. If any of your input factors are slightly different (grind size, input dose, tamp) from the way you prepared the espresso puck during the programming step, the machine will dispense the pre-programmed amount of water and will

display more or less time has elapsed.

Can I use a bottomless portafilter with this machine?

Yes! Feel free to purchase this from Ascaso USA or Espresso Parts.

Espresso Parts: [Ascaso Stainless Steel Bottomless Portafilter Complete w/ Walnut Handle](#)

Ascaso USA: [Ascaso Stainless Steel Bottomless Portafilter Cimplete w/ Walnut Handle](#)

What kind of maintenance is required?

For preventative maintenance, replace the group screen and group gasket EVERY 6 months. Steam valve components may need to be rebuilt annually. Perform a descale at least once quarterly (more often if water is hard) with the following steps: Use 1 oz (28g) of powder for each 32 oz (1 L) of water.

Following this ratio, dissolve Dezcal powder in hot water.

Pour the dissolved solution into the water tank of the machine.

Turn the machine on and begin the brew cycle.

Rinse all parts and repeat with clean water twice.

What is backflushing and when should I do it?

For home use (2-3 coffees daily), backflush this espresso machine once weekly. To backflush, put the blind (aka cleaning) basket in the portafilter. Add a small scoop (penny-sized) of cleaning powder such as [PuroCaff](#) and put lock the portafilter in place in the grouphead. Activate the brew switch for 7 seconds, then release for 10 seconds. Repeat this 5x, then remove the portafilter from the grouphead, and activate the brew switch for 10 seconds allowing the machine to purge. Put the portafilter back into the grouphead without cleaning powder, activate the brew switch for 7 seconds, then release for 10 seconds, and repeat 5x. Then remove the portafilter and activate the brew switch for 10 seconds allowing the machine to purge. Repeat this process until the water from the grouphead and the discharge tube look clean. Additional weekly cleaning steps include removing and cleaning the steam tip, as well as using a grouphead cleaning brush or cloth to wipe oils/grinds off the group screen and group head gasket.

Do I need a grinder to use this machine?

No, the Steel DUO can be used with fresh ground espresso, preground espresso, or even espresso pods. For optimal control over the extraction of your espresso shots, having a grinder is suggested.