

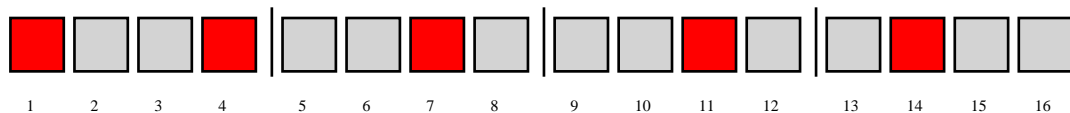
16-Step Sequencer Rhythm Guide – Complete Edition

A complete reference for clave, Euclidean, additive, rotated, and polymetric rhythms, formatted for 16-step sequencers (Elektron, Torso T-1, Bitwig, etc.). Each pattern includes its musical essence and suggestions for use in synth-heavy compositions.

Foundational Rhythms

Son Clave (3-2)

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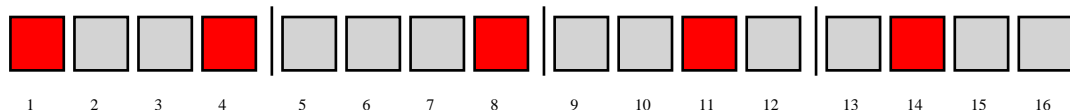


Classic Afro-Cuban timeline. Five notes that balance tension and release across two bars.

Use in synth tracks: Drive plucky synth stabs or basslines. Layer with 4/4 kick to add subtle syncopation without breaking flow.

Rumba Clave (3-2)

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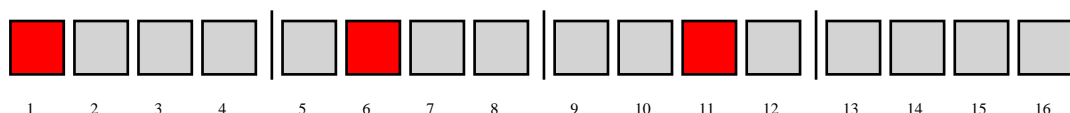


More syncopated cousin of the son clave. The middle note pushes later, adding swing.

Use in synth tracks: Great for percussive synth or transient layers. Use delay synced to the pattern for rolling motion.

Tresillo

Tresillo



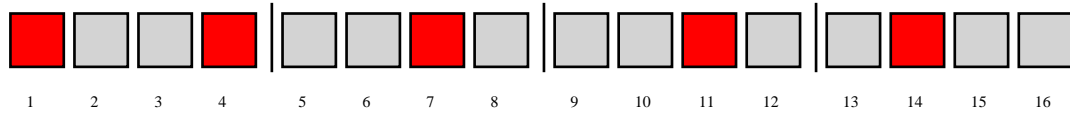
The three-beat cell underlying reggaeton and Afrobeat feels.

Use in synth tracks: Gate a sustained pad or sub on these hits; instant groove tension against 4/4.

Euclidean Patterns

$E(5,16)$

$E(5,16)$

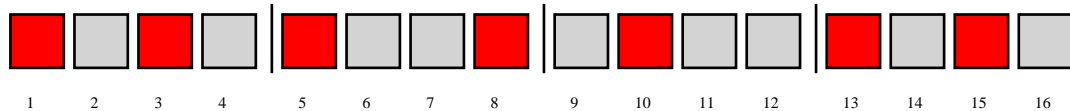


Five hits evenly spaced in 16 steps (identical to son clave rotation).

Use in synth tracks: Use for synth plucks, or automate filter cutoff following the rhythm to create motion.

$E(7,16)$

$E(7,16)$



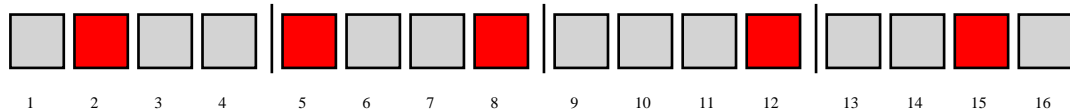
Seven hits distributed evenly. Balanced but non-repeating against 4/4.

Use in synth tracks: Excellent for pad gating or slow modulation triggers. Combine with a 4-on-the-floor kick for complex interplay.

Rotated Variants

$E(5,16)$ Rotated +1

$E(5,16)$ Rotated +1

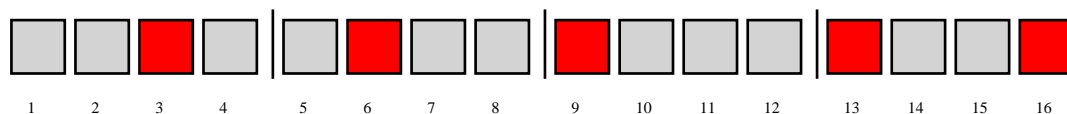


Offset by 1 step(s), shifting accent relationship within the bar.

Use in synth tracks: Rotate to find alternate syncopations for arps or rhythmic filters; great for evolving phrases.

$E(5,16)$ Rotated +2

E(5,16) Rotated +2

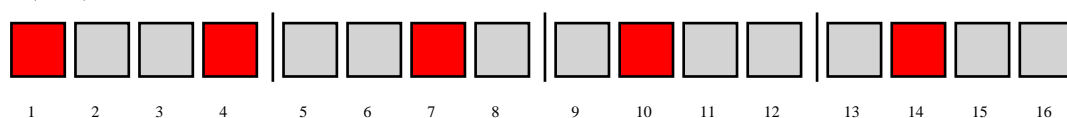


Offset by 2 step(s), shifting accent relationship within the bar.

Use in synth tracks: Rotate to find alternate syncopations for arps or rhythmic filters; great for evolving phrases.

E(5,16) Rotated +3

E(5,16) Rotated +3



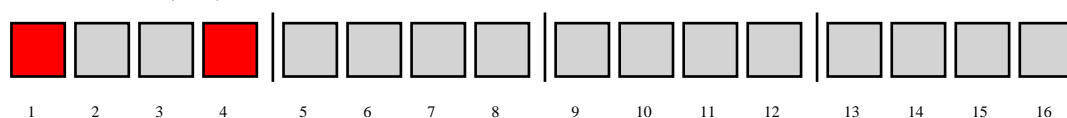
Offset by 3 step(s), shifting accent relationship within the bar.

Use in synth tracks: Rotate to find alternate syncopations for arps or rhythmic filters; great for evolving phrases.

Additive / Asymmetric Patterns

Additive 5/16 (2+3)

Additive 5/16 (2+3)

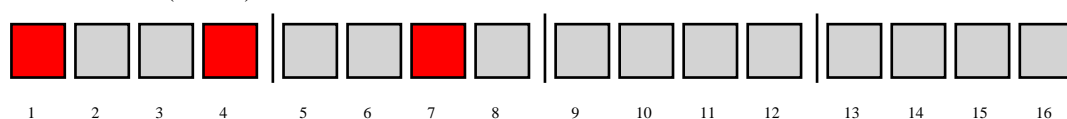


Compact asymmetric rhythm built from a short + long grouping.

Use in synth tracks: Use as a snappy modulation gate or to trigger bursts of noise in ambient or glitch passages.

Additive 7/16 (3+2+2)

Additive 7/16 (3+2+2)

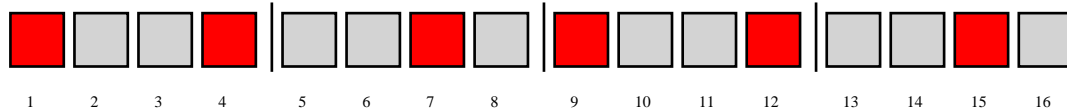


Seven-step pattern common in Balkan rhythms. Keeps pushing forward.

Use in synth tracks: Apply to FM plucks or metallic synths; combine with 4/4 hats for rolling cross-groove.

Additive 11/16 (3+3+2+3)

Additive 11/16 (3+3+2+3)



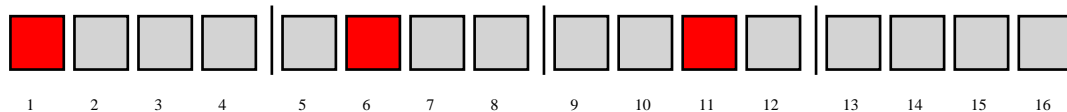
Long asymmetric cycle—rarely aligns perfectly with 4/4, creating endless motion.

Use in synth tracks: Ideal for polymetric layers on drones or bass pulses. Add subtle filter automation to emphasize its shifting accents.

Polyrhythmic & Polymetric Concepts

Polyrhythm 3:2 (mapped to 16)

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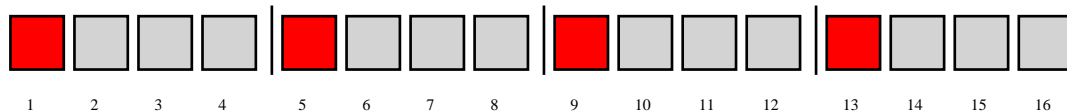


Three beats stretched across the space of two; a fundamental cross-rhythm.

Use in synth tracks: Perfect for dual-LFO modulation: one at 3Hz, one at 2Hz, both synced to bar start.

Polymeter 4 vs 5 Overlay

Polymeter 4 vs 5 Overlay



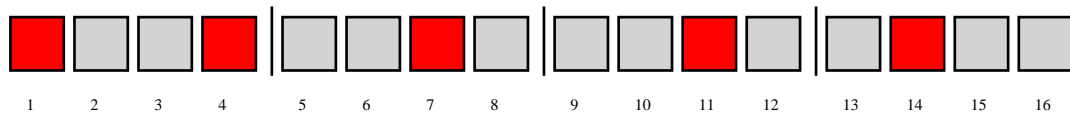
Demonstrates how 4-beat and 5-beat cycles drift in phase over 16 steps.

Use in synth tracks: Use 4-step hats and 5-step bassline loops to make hypnotic techno grooves that evolve subtly every bar.

Suggested Polymetric Combinations

E(5,16) vs E(7,16)

E(5,16) vs E(7,16)

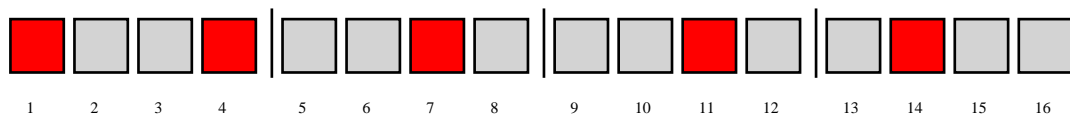


Layering 5- and 7-hit patterns creates a 35-step composite cycle before repeating.

Use in synth tracks: Assign one rhythm to mid synth hits and the other to modulation pulses—generates long-form evolving texture.

Additive 7/16 vs Clave 3-2

Additive 7/16 vs Clave 3-2

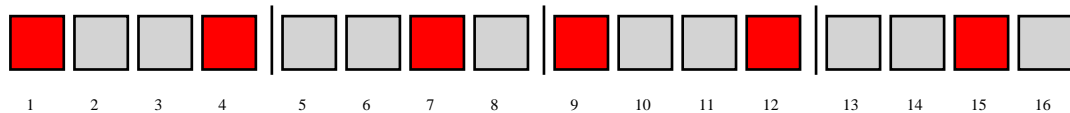


A hybrid feel combining Afro and Eastern asymmetry.

Use in synth tracks: Try it with two synth voices—one dry, one drenched in delay—for syncopated dialogue.

11/16 Overlay on 4/4

11/16 Overlay on 4/4



Longer cycle drifting over steady 4/4 base.

Use in synth tracks: Gate ambient pads or granular textures for organic rhythmic tension that never fully resolves.

Each pattern's structure can also be used as modulation timing: map these rhythms to filter cutoff, wavefold depth, or FX sends to inject rhythmic life into sustained synths.