STACCATO

Prompting Guide

QUICK START: See The Quick Overview (TLDR) to get started right away.

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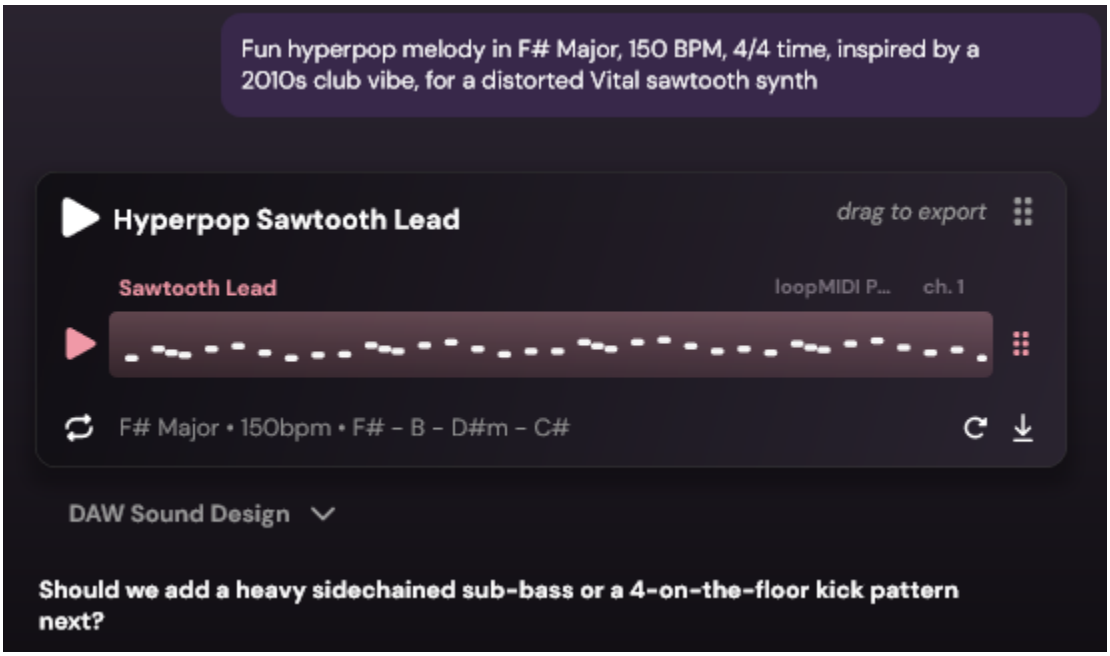
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The Quick Overview (TLDR)

- **Prompt**: Vague prompts work, but more detail produces a closer fit to your idea. Use musical terminology for the best results.
- **Scope**: Work section-by-section (verse, chorus, etc.). Only upload MIDI/sheet music under 32 bars, and keep audio files clean and under 30 seconds for best results.
- **Iterate**: Don't like the result? Reply and say what to change. Staccato is a conversational partner, not a slot machine.
- **Experiment**: Hit a wall? Ask Staccato directly for song ideas, sound design tips, or suggestions on what to do next.

Easy Prompting Template:

[mood] [genre] [instrument part] in [key], [BPM], [time signature], inspired by [artist/era/style], for [VST]



Part 1: Use Cases

When using Staccato, it's often helpful to keep your goal(s) in mind. You're in the studio with your co-writer. What do you need from them, and what do they need to know?

Possible Goals:

- "I want to start a song from scratch"
- "I have an idea already; I just need to know where to go next"
- "I want to build new parts on my song"
- "I want to reimagine my song in a new style"
- "I want my instrument converted into a different one"
- "I need suggestions and ideas"
- "I want to fine-tune my idea"

We cover how to use Staccato for each of these goals in the sections below. After that, we share some ideas for when you don't have a specific goal in mind. Sometimes it's just fun to experiment!

Starting From Scratch

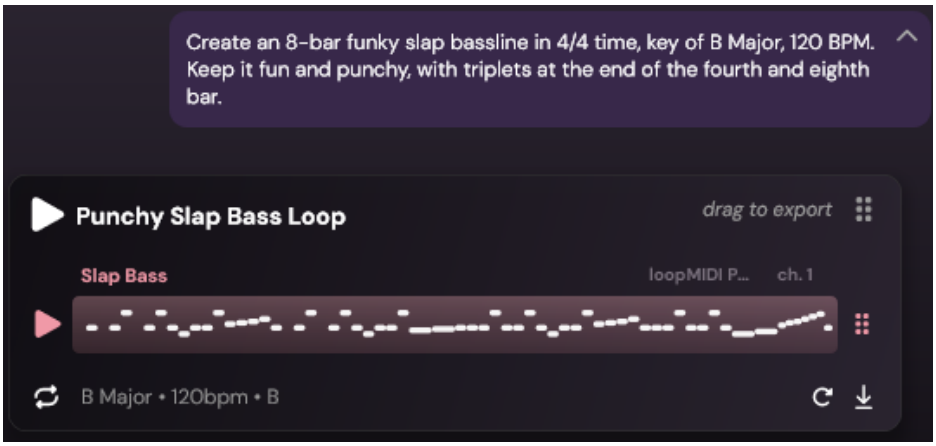
Give Staccato an idea and build on it from there. Most producers start one of two ways: a single part they can grow, or a short multi-part loop.

Starting with a single part means one instrument, one track: for example, a bassline, a chord progression, or a drum beat. Since Staccato works best as a back-and-forth conversation, one part can be the perfect opening move.

The bare minimum is naming the part you want. That alone can produce something usable, but the more you tell Staccato about the sound in your head, the closer the result lands.

Weak Prompt: “Funky bassline.”

Strong Prompt: “Create an 8-bar funky slap bassline in 4/4 time, key of B Major, 120 BPM. Keep it fun and punchy, with triplets at the end of the fourth and eighth bar.”



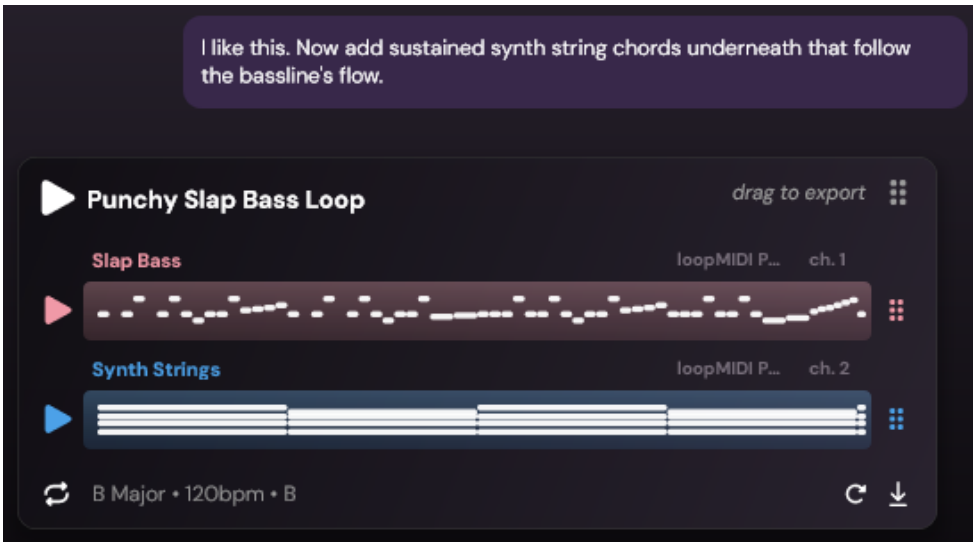
Starting with a multi-part idea gives you several instrument tracks that complement each other from the start. Here, detail matters even more, since each part needs a clear job.

Weak Prompt: “Hip hop loop.”

Strong Prompt: "16-bar West Coast hip hop loop at 100 BPM, 4/4 time, key of C Minor. High-octave sawtooth lead melody, sparse but groovy drum beat, and a simple sub bassline to complement the lead. Smooth and moody."

Keep the conversation going. Once you have a part you like, prompt again in the same chat to build on it:

Follow-up Prompt: "I like this. Now add sustained synth string chords underneath that follow the bassline's flow."



Quick Tips:

- Like one track in a multi-track output? Click and drag that track to export it on its own. Or, single-click on that track to load it into the chat and continue iterating on it.
- Prompts max out at 500 characters. Detail helps, but you don't need an essay: 2-3 full sentences usually cover everything Staccato needs.

Continuing an Existing Idea

You already have material to work with: whether it's MIDI, an audio file, sheet music/tab, or something you've recorded live with the Record feature. Staccato listens first, then builds new sections on it.

The best way to extend your idea is by working one section at a time: a verse into a pre-chorus, or a chorus into a bridge. Follow these guidelines for the best results:

- MIDI files and sheet music must be under 32 bars. MIDI files under 16 bars produce the best results.
- MP3/WAV must be under 30 seconds in length: clean arrangements transcribe best.
- Include the key, time signature, and BPM in your prompt when uploading audio.

Weak Prompt: “Extend this.”

Strong Prompt: "Extend this progressive-rock verse into an 8-bar pre-chorus. Start with minimal drums that gradually increase in density, with the rhythm guitar playing arpeggios to progressively raise the energy. End on a held chord to set up a big chorus entrance."



If the result doesn’t fit, you can tell Staccato what needs to be corrected:

Follow-up Prompt: "This doesn't fit, it drifts too far from the original melody. Simplify the guitar melody so it better resembles the verse."



Quick Tips:

- Each project you’re working on should have its own chat. Staccato remembers and maintains context in each chat (key, genre, etc.) unless you indicate that you’re moving on to a different idea entirely.
- Adjust the Creativity slider to communicate how closely MIDI generations stick to the source material.



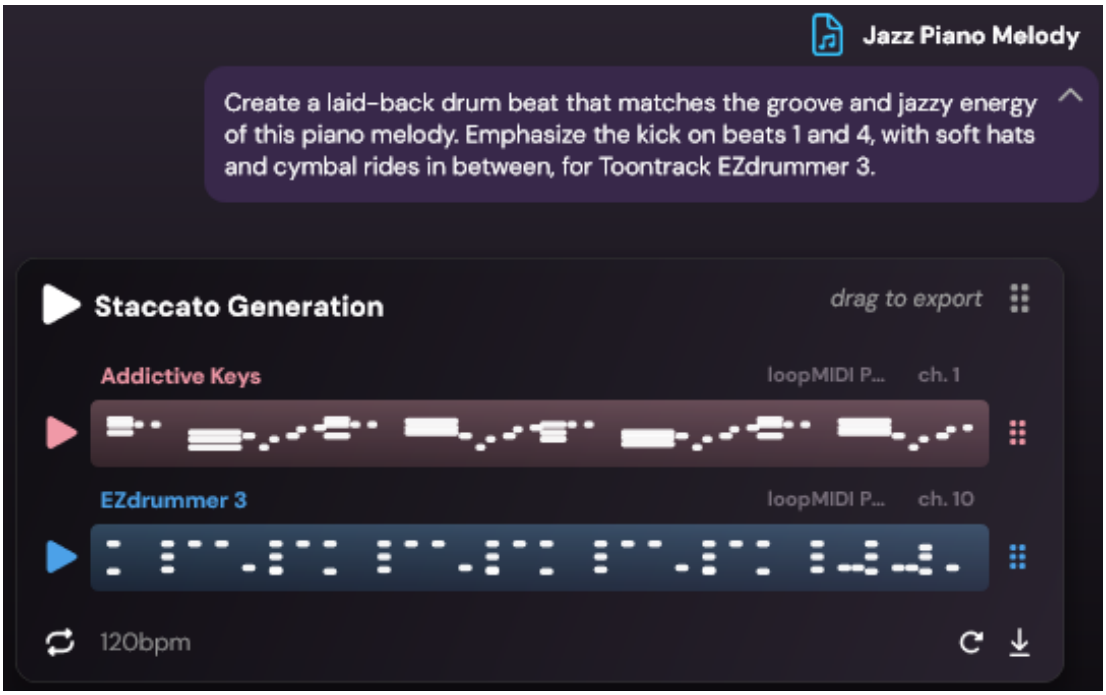
Adding New Parts

You've got an idea, generated by Staccato or uploaded by you, and want instruments added to it: drums for a melody, a bassline to chords, closed hat pattern on a beat.

This is an accompaniment, and the key to getting it right is to describe the relationship between parts, not just the new part itself.

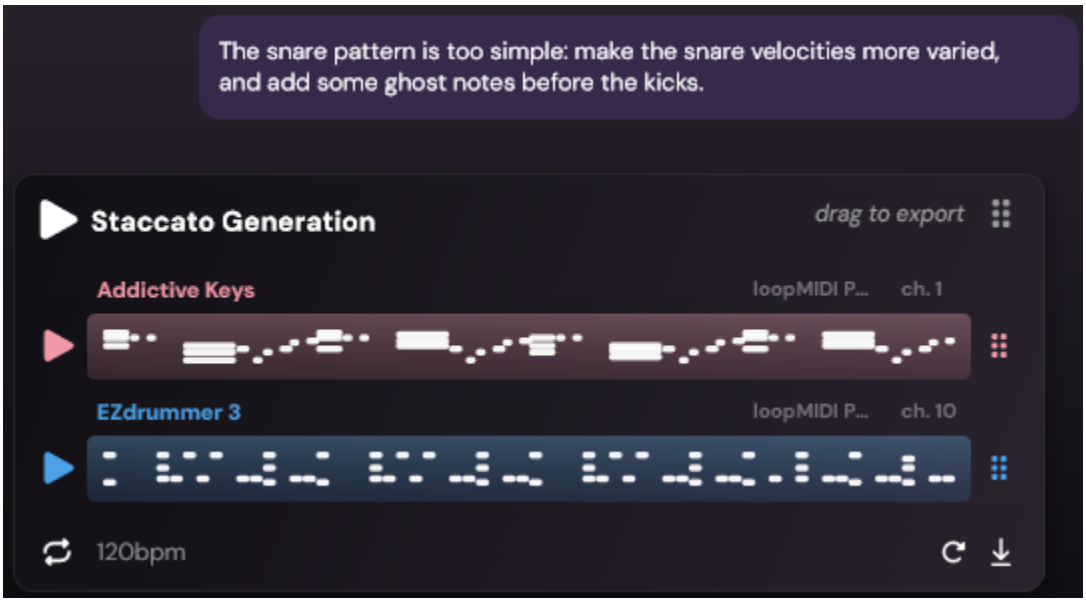
Weak Prompt: “Add drums.”

Strong Prompt: "Create a laid-back drum beat that matches the groove and jazzy energy of this piano melody. Emphasize the kick on beats 1 and 4, with soft hats and cymbal rides in between, for Toontrack EZdrummer 3."



You can keep building new parts onto the result in your follow-up prompts, but you can also refine the output further:

Follow-up Prompt: "The snare pattern is too simple: make the snare velocities more varied, and add some ghost notes before the kicks."



Quick Tips:

- Like one track in a multi-track output? Click and drag to export it on its own, or to target your next prompt at just that track.
- You can add up to 16 tracks per MIDI, so there's plenty of room to layer instruments.

Reimagining in a New Style

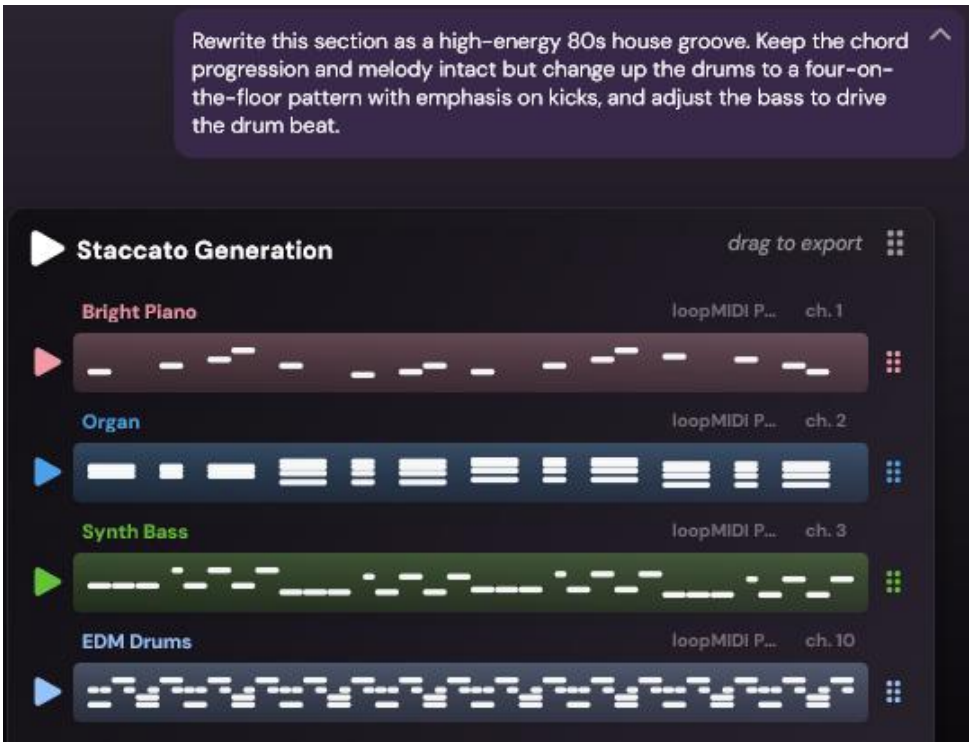
You have an idea, generated by Staccato or uploaded by you, and you're curious what it would sound like in another genre, style, or mood. This is where Staccato offers you a new perspective, like a real co-writer.

Using Staccato to reimagine your MIDI starts with describing what should be changed *and* what should remain. Short, vague prompts work if you'd like to give Staccato full control of the output, but set boundaries in your prompt if you have a specific idea in mind.

Use a mindset of "keep X, change Y" as a guideline when rewriting.

Weak Prompt: "Make it sound like house."

Strong Prompt: "Rewrite this section as a high-energy 80s house groove. Keep the chord progression and melody intact but change up the drums to a four-on-the-floor pattern with emphasis on kicks, and adjust the bass to drive the drum beat."



If you have a different idea in mind, you can use a follow-up prompt to clarify further:

Follow-up Prompt: "The house drums work, but the bass lost the feel of the original. Bring back something closer to the original bassline but fit around the new tempo from the drums."



Quick Tips:

- You can always refer to previous generations in the chat by clicking on a generated place card. So if you've made a revision you don't like, simply scroll up and select the original version.
- Artist, era, and style references in your prompt help your output fit your vision.
- Click the “Try Again” button if you’d like a new output from the same prompt.

Converting Your Instruments

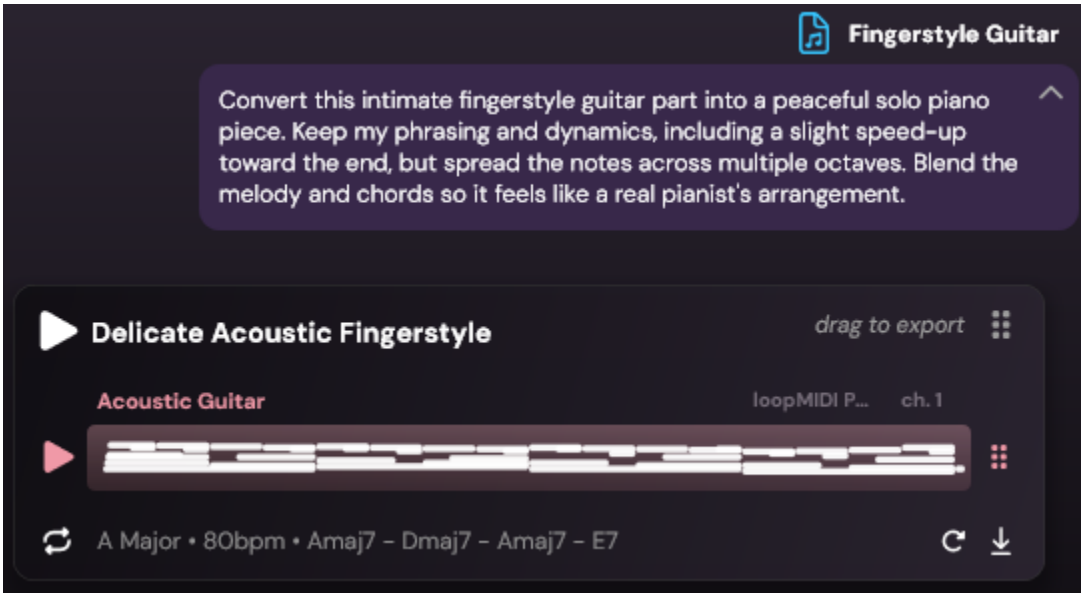
You have a recorded instrument part, like a live guitar captured with the Record feature, or a violin melody from your DAW, and you want it played by a different instrument. Prompt Staccato for the conversion and receive an output that follows your idea but fits its new instrument.

Be as clear as possible with details like note range (C3-C5), instrument characteristics (velocity muting for guitar, octave jumps for piano), and style or genre (ragtime piano, funk).

Your performance can survive the conversion too: dynamics, phrasing, and timing, like a gradual accelerando, all carry over when you ask for them. This lets you play the instrument you know and still write naturally for the ones you don't.

Weak Prompt: “Turn this into a piano.”

Strong Prompt: "Turn this video-game style piano intro into a tense, climactic electric guitar solo. Blend the chords and melody to fill the higher and lower octaves, with velocity muting to emphasize the gaps between the melody. Change up the melody to fit an actual guitar player's style.”



If the output needs adjusting, or a fitting addition, write a follow-up prompt:

Follow-up Prompt (Revision): "The piano feels stiff compared to the original. Loosen the timing slightly and let the melody play more freely."

Follow-up Prompt (Accompaniment): "Now add a fitting bassline that drives the chord progression, with occasional octave jumps to complement the ascending piano melody"

Quick Tips:

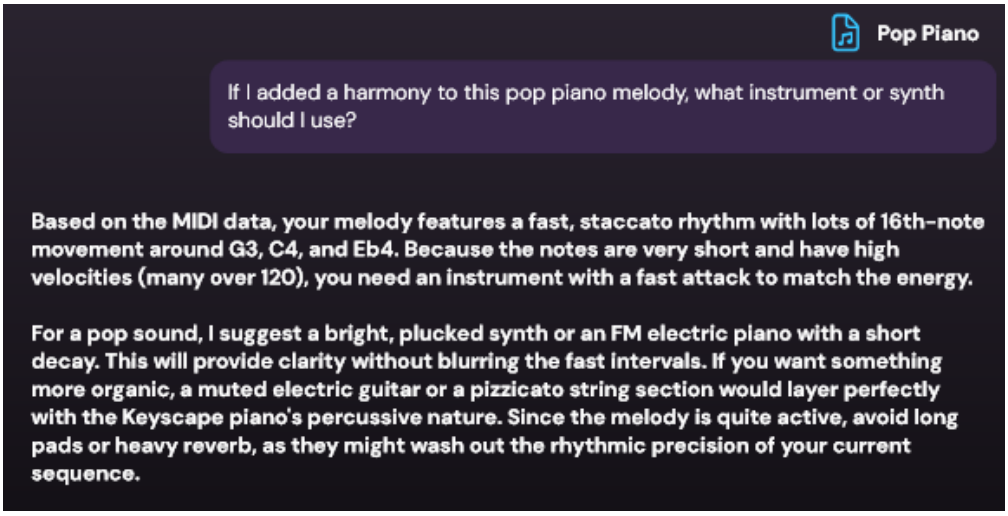
- Include your specific virtual instrument in your prompt to receive outputs tailored to its sound.
- You can convert your instruments with both single and multi-track MIDI files: multi-track files offer more context for Staccato to understand how the converted instrument fits the song.

Discovering New Ideas

Staccato's primary feature is MIDI generation, but it's also a music production assistant you can converse with. You can ask questions about composition, sound design, DAW-specific techniques, and song ideas. If you need opinions and ideas before you get to work in the studio, Staccato is there to help.

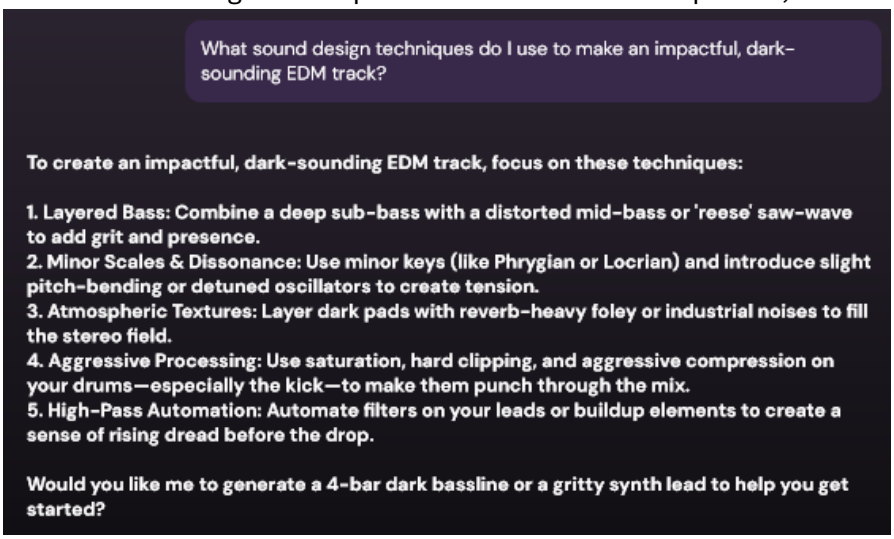
Try uploading a MIDI file, and asking Staccato to review it:

- "Here's a chord progression I made. What would you change to make it feel more cinematic and climactic?"
- "If I added a harmony to this pop piano melody, what instrument or synth should I use?"



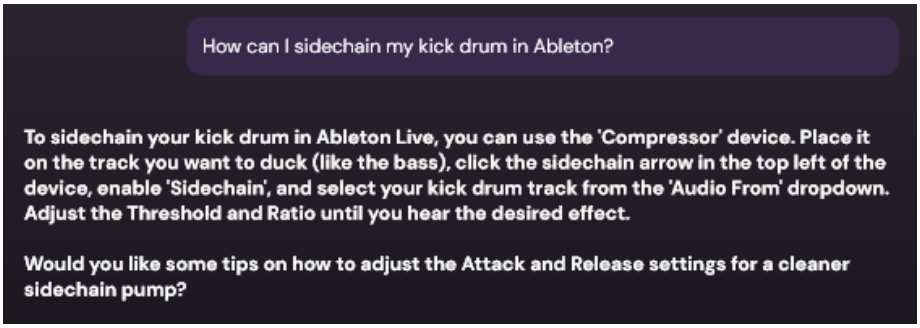
You don't always need a MIDI file either. Try asking Staccato for direction:

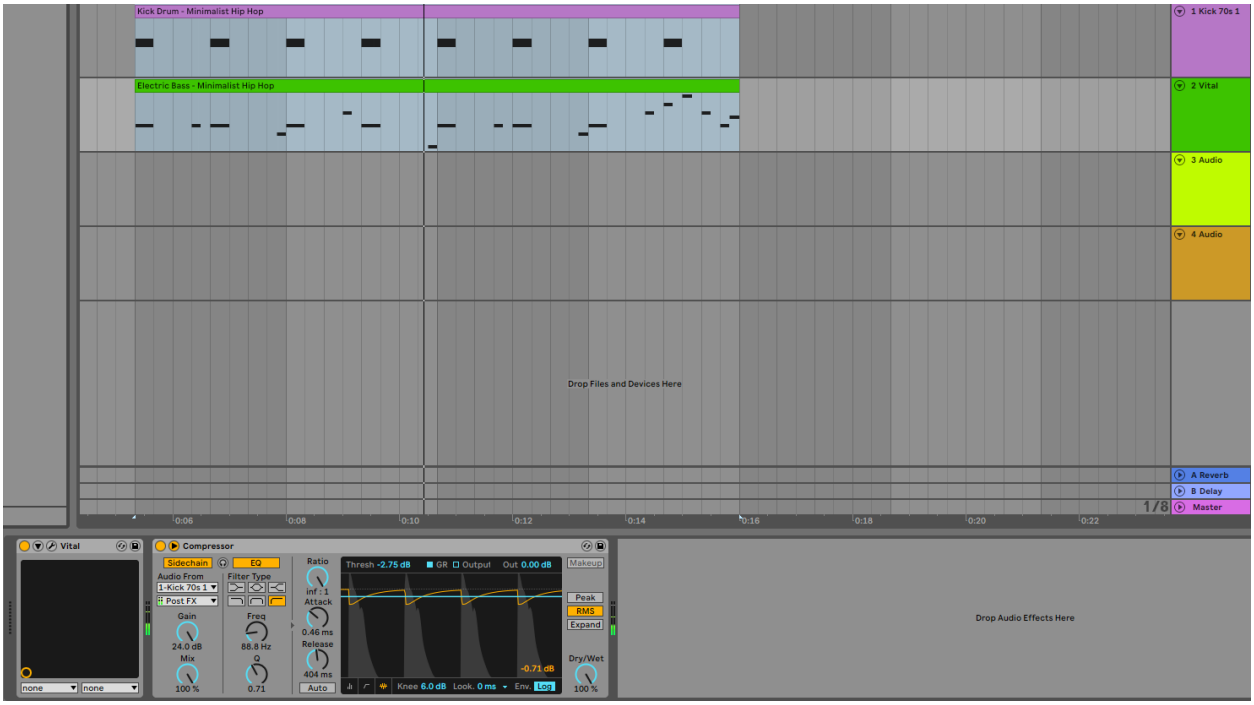
- "I'm learning how to make hip-hop music. Where should I start in terms of instrumentation?"
- "What sound design techniques do I use to make an impactful, dark-sounding EDM track?"



Staccato can also offer DAW-specific tips:

- “How do I get a punchy sub bass with native FL Studio plugins?”
- “How can I sidechain my kick drum in Ableton?”



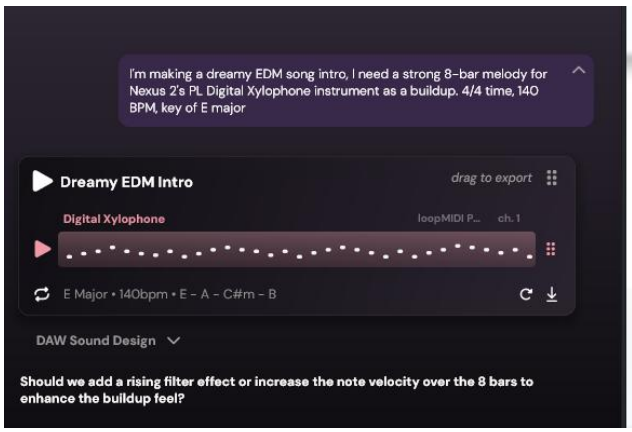


Staccato can help you turn your questions into real ideas as MIDI:

- “Can you generate a MIDI sub bass pattern for a hip-hop beat using 3x OSC?”
- “Make a harmony that would fit my pop piano melody using the synth you suggested.”

Quick Tips:

- Staccato remembers the context in each chat, so the ideas discussed become the ingredients for MIDI outputs without needing to restate them.
- Including your plugins and DAW in your prompt improves the accuracy of responses.





Fine-Tuning Your Idea

Your idea is close to what you want, but not quite what you hear in your head. Maybe the drums feel too robotic, or the melody is too simple. Staccato can fix up your idea without changing it entirely.

Similar to reimagining your MIDI, identify what works so it remains, and describe what doesn't so it can be changed. Pointing this out to Staccato in your prompt informs exactly what needs changed to fit your idea.

Fix the feeling of your MIDI, such as timing, dynamics, and note qualities, which is essentially when the notes are right, but the performance overall doesn't fit:

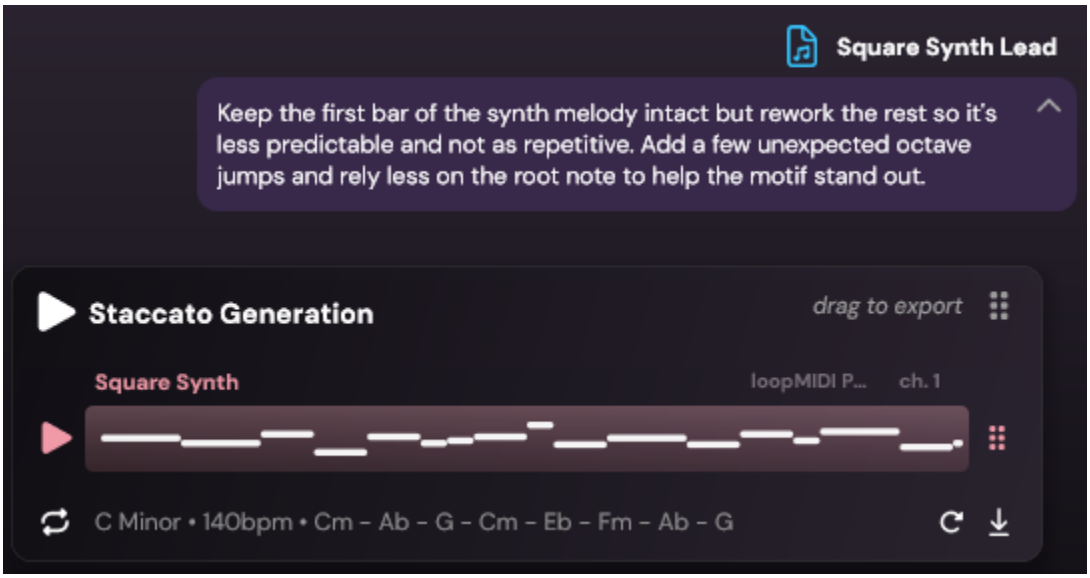
Weak Prompt: "Make these drums better."

Strong Prompt: "Humanize these drums: loosen the timing slightly, vary the hi-hat velocities, and soften the snares a bit so it feels played by a human in a jazz band."

Fix the content of your MIDI, which covers adjustments to the notes themselves, such as if a part feels too simple or too busy:

Weak Prompt: "Make the melody more unique."

Strong Prompt: "Keep the first bar of the synth melody intact but rework the rest so it's less predictable and not as repetitive. Add a few unexpected octave jumps and rely less on the root note to help the motif stand out."



Keep the conversation going. You can continuously fine-tune your results, and each prompt builds on the last:

Follow-up Prompt: "Much better. Now vary the melody's velocities slightly, with emphasis on the higher octave notes to make them stand out."

Quick Tips:

- If you don't like a revision and you'd rather start over, press the "Try Again" button, or click the original file's place card to load it into the chat for a new prompt.
- Click a track's name to target the specific part you'd like adjusted.

I Don't Know Yet

If you don’t know what you want to do yet, that itself can be a prompt.

- “I don’t know where to start. What should I do?”
- “I’m out of ideas. Can you suggest some?”
- “I'm going to the store, do you want anything?”

It replies with questions about musical elements, genre, and mood to help you get started. From there, your conversation can evolve into unexpected new directions. Sometimes we find this leads us into genres we’ve never explored before.

You can also try the sample prompt buttons under the text box when starting a new chat: these buttons produce prompts you can use to instantly get started.

Other

Staccato offers powerful MIDI generation features and detailed conversational interactions, but it can also cover more technical and convenient use-cases, such as:

- “Add ¼ note hi-hats to this 32-bar drum beat”
- “Put the tracks in this MIDI file in this order: drums, bass, guitar”
- “Turn this recording of my piano into guitar tab”

If you’re trying an approach that differs from the other options, you’re welcome to ask Staccato itself for advice or ideas of what to do.

Your specific feature or approach may already be offered by Staccato: check out our User Guide to learn more about all of Staccato’s features (beyond just prompting). If you’ve found a use case for Staccato that our user guide doesn’t cover, send us an email: we’d be interested to hear about it.

If this guide doesn’t cover your specific purpose for using Staccato, feel free to reach out to us at contact@staccato.ai, and we’re happy to offer personalized suggestions.

We also encourage you to join our Discord server: we have plenty of active users, beta testers, and staff members who are happy to answer any question you might have.

Part 2: Best Practices

The first part of this guide covers what good prompts look like in different scenarios. This part dives into why they work, how to build your own prompt from scratch, troubleshoot when something goes wrong, and get more out of every generation.

Specificity

Think of prompting Staccato like briefing a co-writer on your idea in the studio. They're ready to help you make your music, but they can only work with what you tell them.

If you sat down and said "EDM melody," what would you expect to receive back? It'd likely be generic, since that's all the direction they had.

This is because AI generally takes prompts very literally, and it doesn't have context outside of what you tell it. Therefore, specific and detailed prompts are the best way to direct Staccato to create what you're looking for.

The same applies if you ask, "fix this." That likely isn't enough for a human collaborator to help, so it isn't enough for Staccato either.

Weak Prompt: "EDM melody."

Strong Prompt: "Uplifting EDM lead melody in F Major, 128 BPM, 4/4 time. Festival energy, inspired by progressive house, with a rising build in the last 2 bars."

While detailed and specific prompts work best, vague prompts aren't necessarily wrong either: they help with experimenting if you don't have a firm idea yet. The difference in these prompts is control: a vague prompt delegates the decisions to Staccato, and a detailed prompt directs Staccato's decisions. When you have an idea in your head, detail is how you steer toward it.

One habit to keep in mind overall is to write complete ideas, rather than fragments: The character limit for prompts is 500, and most prompts can cover all the required detail in 2-5 sentences.

Prompt Ingredients

If you're unsure which details to include in your prompt, here's a list of the most important information you can add:

- Key (Bb Minor, G Major)
- BPM (90, 128)
- Time signature (4/4, 3/4, 7/8)
- Genre or subgenre (pop punk, lo-fi hip hop, boom bap)
- Mood and emotion (triumphant, nostalgic, dark)
- Instrument part (bassline, violin section, kick drum pattern)
- Artist, era, or style inspiration (90s French house, inspired by [artist name])
- Musical terminology (syncopation, ghost notes, walking bass, chord inversions)
- Specific VST plugins (Vital, BBC Symphony Orchestra, ToonTrack EZdrummer 3)
- Structure notes (a fill every 4 bars, build-up in the last 2, intense intro, buildup)

This is only a list of suggestions: you don't need to include all of these. Even two or three significantly improve the focus of your results. See an example of how you can apply this here:

Vague Prompt: "Violin section."

Decent Prompt: "Rich, triumphant cinematic violin section, 3/4 time."

Great Prompt: "Rich, triumphant cinematic violin section, 3/4 time, 90 BPM, on Kontakt Stradivari violin. Fitting for a victory theme at the end of a fantasy battle. Use expression CC to resemble how a human would play the notes."

Another layer worth considering in your prompt is CC Events: these allow you to prompt for details like velocity, expression, release, or any CC you have set up. Adding these into your prompts can look like:

- Use CC11 (Expression) to make your orchestral pieces sound more human.
- Use CC64 (Sustain) to add dynamic sound to your piano piece.
- Link a knob on your synth to a CC, then prompt with it to modulate your synth as it plays.

CC Events can be enabled and disabled in settings.

Rewrite and Reiterate

Your first result is a draft, not a final verdict. Staccato is a conversation, and the producers who get the most out of it treat the first generation as the starting point, rather than a finished product.

A good follow-up prompt does three things. It includes:

- What to keep.
- What to change.
- What direction to take the change in.

A prompt like “fix this” does none of the three, but “Keep the bassline, but simplify the melody and make the chords darker” does all three. This kind of precision helps Staccato get closer to your idea.

Here’s what a real conversation looks like:

Prompt 1: "Make a 16-bar indie rock verse, upbeat and fit for a summer road trip, in G Major, 4/4 time, 110 BPM. Strummed acoustic guitar chords, a short, punchy bassline for Ample Bass P Lite II, and a soft drum beat with open hats at the end of each bar."

Prompt 2: “The guitar strums are too simple. Use open voicings so the guitar stands out and creates a bigger sound."

Prompt 3: “Great, now extend this by 8 bars into a short build toward a chorus. Move the snare to the downbeat to signal the buildup.”

Notice the follow-up prompts never restate the key, tempo, or genre. Staccato retains your chat’s context across prompts, so corrections can be short and focused. The context only shifts when you upload or describe something clearly different from what you’ve been working on.

Here are two more features to point out when iterating with Staccato:

- Use the **Try Again** button at the bottom right of any generation to regenerate using the same prompt.
- Use the **Creativity Slider** under the chat box to control how unexpected your results are (50% by default). Reduce it for grounded, predictable results, and increase it for surprising, unique outputs. Adjusting the slider can be faster than prompting “simplify” or “make more unique.”

Common Issues: Why Didn't My Prompt Work?

Sometimes issues can come up, and these entries cover how to sort them out:

The output is generic or misses your idea:

- Your prompt likely didn't explain the idea you had in mind.
- Try adding two or three details from the Prompt Ingredients section, or follow up and describe what to keep and what to change.

Your generated MIDI doesn't sound right:

- Staccato generates notes, not audio: so a prompt requesting "crisp hi-hats" doesn't change the sound of your hi-hats.
- You can prompt for sound design suggestions to pair with your MIDI if you have a certain sound in mind, or request MIDI that fits your sound design already (e.g., notes that start earlier for your pads with attack).

You uploaded a full song and the result ignored most of it:

- Staccato works section-by-section. Upload just the verse or chorus you're working on, and keep MIDI and sheet music under 32 bars.

Your audio upload failed or transcribed poorly:

- Audio needs to be under 30 seconds in length, and it's recommended to use MP3/WAV format for best results. Similar to MIDI, we suggest uploading just the verse or chorus you're working on, rather than a whole song.
- Clarity also matters. Clean arrangements with clear separation between instruments transcribe well, dense or muddy mixes don't.
- Drums and melodic instrumental parts convert more accurately than vocals.

Staccato misread your key or instrument:

- Check for abbreviations. "B Maj," "Bm," and shortened instrument names can sometimes be misread. If this issue comes up, try spelling them out entirely.

None of these resolved my issues:

- Read Part 2: Best Practices to learn key prompting tips.
- Reach out at support@staccato.ai, or join our Discord server: we're happy to help.

Prompting Templates

This all-purpose template works as a starting point:

[mood] [genre] [instrument part] in [key], [BPM], [time signature], inspired by [artist/era/style], for [VST]

Three variants for most common situations:

- **Starting fresh:** [mood] [genre] [part or multi-part loop] in [key], [BPM], [time signature], [length in bars], inspired by [artist/era/style], for [VST]

- **Working with an upload:** [what to do: extend/rewrite/transform] this [section type], keeping [what to preserve]. [Direction for what changes], in the style of [genre/artist/era].

- **Following up on a result:** Keep [what works]. Change [what doesn't] by [specific direction you have in mind].

Fill in what you know into these templates, drop what you don't, and remember the template is simply a starting point, not a form to complete.

Part 3: List of Prompt Ideas by Genre

Pop

Pop prompts work best when you name the mood and the era, since "pop" alone spans decades.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Upbeat pop chord progression in C Major, 118 BPM, 4/4 time. Bright piano chords with a simple, catchy top-line melody, inspired by 2010s radio pop. Keep it 8 bars."
- "Moody synth-pop verse in A Minor, 100 BPM, with a pulsing eighth-note synth bass, sparse electronic drums, and an airy lead melody with lots of space between phrases."
- "Make a euphoric 16-bar pop chorus in G Major, 124 BPM. Big open chords, a soaring vocal-style lead melody, and driving drums with a fill leading into the final bar."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a bassline to this chord progression that locks with the kick drum. Keep it simple and rounded, mostly root notes with occasional passing tones, for Ample Bass P Lite II."
- "Keep the melody and chords, but slow it down a bit, and make it feel like a stripped-back ballad: softer dynamics, longer sustained chords, and lighter drums."
- "Extend this verse by 8 bars into a pre-chorus. Gradually raise the energy, tighten the drum pattern, and end on a suspended chord that sets up the chorus."

Hip-Hop

Name the subgenre or era: boom bap, trap, and West Coast all pull in very different directions.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Make a hip hop hi-hat pattern with triplets and occasional rolls, 140 BPM, 4/4 time. Sparse and modern trap feel, with velocity variation so the hats breathe."
- "Laid-back boom bap drum beat at 88 BPM with ghost snare hits, a dusty loose feel, and swung hats, inspired by 90s East Coast hip hop, for Battery 4 Hip-Hop Kit."
- "16-bar West Coast hip hop loop in C Minor, 92 BPM. High-octave portamento sawtooth lead, sparse but groovy drums, and a simple sub bassline underneath. Smooth and moody."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a deep 808-style sub bassline that follows this drum pattern's kick placement, with slides between notes and room to breathe in the second half of each bar."
- "Keep the drums exactly as they are, but rewrite the melody as a darker, minor-key piano loop with a haunted, late-night feel."
- "Extend this beat by 8 bars into a switch-up section: drop the hi-hats for the first 4 bars, then bring everything back with double-time hats for the last 4."

Rock

Say how hard it should hit, and name the era: garage, arena, and 70s classic rock are worlds apart.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Driving rock drum beat at 145 BPM with punchy kick, crashes on section changes, and a big fill every 8 bars, inspired by early 2000s garage rock, for Toontrack Superior Drummer 3."
- "Palm-muted power chord rhythm guitar riff in E Minor, 130 BPM, 4/4 time. Tight and aggressive with accents on the off-beats, in the style of 90s alternative rock."
- "16-bar classic rock verse in A Major, 120 BPM. Warm strummed electric guitar chords, a melodic bassline with walking transitions for MODO Bass, and a steady drum groove with open hats in the last bar of each phrase."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a bass guitar line under this riff that follows the guitar's rhythm in the verses but breaks into eighth-note runs during the last 2 bars, for MODO Bass."
- "Keep the drums and bass, but rewrite the guitar part as a cleaner, brighter arpeggiated pattern with a hopeful feel instead of heavy, forceful chords."
- "Extend this verse by 8 bars into a building bridge: strip back to just bass and kick for 4 bars, then layer the guitars back in with rising intensity toward a final crash."

Electronic/EDM

Keep the subgenre in mind here: house, techno, synthwave, and future bass all differ greatly.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Rolling deep house bassline in F Minor, 122 BPM, 4/4 time. Hypnotic and repetitive with subtle note variations every 4 bars, syncopated against a four-on-the-floor kick, for Sylenth1."
- "Dreamy synthwave chord progression at 100 BPM in A Minor, with lush 80s-style pads, slow attack, and a nostalgic late-night mood, inspired by retro film soundtracks, for Arturia Pigments."
- "16-bar melodic techno loop in D Minor, 126 BPM. Driving kick and off-beat hats, a dark plucked arpeggio that evolves every 4 bars, and a minimal sustained pad underneath. Moody and propulsive."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a euphoric supersaw lead melody over these chords, sitting in a high octave with long held notes and a simple, singable shape, for Serum 2."
- "Keep the kick and bass, but rewrite the melodic elements as a stripped-back minimal techno arrangement: fewer notes, more space, darker mood."
- "Extend this loop by 16 bars into a breakdown and drop: strip to pads and a filtered melody for 8 bars, then bring back the full groove with an added counter-melody for the final 8."

Funk + R&B + Soul

Rhythm detail (syncopation, ghost notes, etc.) matters more here than anywhere else.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Funky slap bassline in E Minor, 105 BPM, 4/4 time. Percussive and syncopated with ghost notes and octave pops, inspired by 70s funk, for Spectrasonics Trilian."
- "Smooth neo-soul chord progression at 75 BPM in D Major, with extended jazzy chords, lazy behind-the-beat feel, and warm electric piano voicings, for Arturia Stage-73 V."
- "16-bar classic soul groove in F Major, 96 BPM. Tight drum pocket with ghost snare hits, a melodic bassline that walks between chord changes, and short punchy horn-style stabs on the off-beats."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a rhythm guitar part over this groove: clean, tight 16th-note funk strumming with muted scratches between chords, staying out of the bass's way."
- "Keep the chords and melody, but rewrite the rhythm section with a half-time feel to turn this into a slow-burning soul ballad."
- "Extend this groove by 8 bars into a breakdown: drop everything except bass and drums for 4 bars, then rebuild with the chords returning one layer at a time."

Lo-fi

Prompt for looseness, space, and simplicity, and let your sound design handle the dust and warble.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Mellow lo-fi hip hop chord loop in F Major, 78 BPM, with soft jazzy seventh chords, a loose relaxed feel, and slightly humanized timing, for Spitfire LABS Soft Piano."
- "Simple lo-fi drum beat at 82 BPM with a soft dusty kick, laid-back snare slightly behind the beat, and sparse swung hats. Sleepy late-night mood."
- "8-bar lo-fi study loop in A Minor, 75 BPM. Warm piano chords, a round simple bassline, and a gentle melody with lots of space between phrases. Nostalgic and calm."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a soft counter-melody over this loop, sitting in a higher octave with short gentle phrases that answer the main melody instead of competing with it."
- "Keep the drums, but rewrite the chords and melody in a minor key for a rainier, more melancholic mood."
- "Extend this loop by 8 bars with a subtle variation: same feel, but swap the last chord for a surprise borrowed chord and let the melody wander a little further."

Jazz & Blues

Naming a groove (swing, shuffle, bossa) or a form (12-bar blues) is essential here.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Jazz trio groove in 3/4, key of B-flat Major, 140 BPM. Brushed drums, sparse comping piano chords with rich voicings, and walking upright bass for Ample Bass Upright."
- "Slow 12-bar blues in E Major, 65 BPM, 12/8 time. Gritty shuffle feel with a simple bassline outlining the changes and a lead guitar melody, leaving plenty of space for the bass."
- "Uptempo bebop-style piano melody in F Major, 180 BPM, swing feel. Angular eighth-note lines with chromatic passing tones over a ii-V-I progression, for Spectrasonics Keyscape."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a walking bassline under this piano part that outlines the chord changes with quarter notes, adding chromatic approach tones into each new chord."
- "Keep the melody, but rewrite the harmony with richer chord substitutions: use tritones and extended voicings, for a late-night ballad feel."
- "Extend this 12-bar blues to a chorus where the melody becomes a call-and-response: two-bar phrases with space for an answer between each."

Folk + Country

Prompt for playing techniques (fingerpicking, strumming patterns) to fit the genre.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Warm fingerpicked acoustic guitar pattern in G Major, 92 BPM, 4/4 time. Travis picking style with an alternating bass thumb and gentle melody notes on top, for Ample Guitar M."
- "Waltzing folk chord progression in D Major, 3/4 time, 120 BPM. Simple strummed acoustic chords with an emphasis on beat one, warm and intimate, like a campfire ballad."
- "16-bar upbeat country verse in A Major, 112 BPM. Bright strummed acoustic guitar, a simple walking bassline connecting the chord changes, and a train-beat drum pattern with brushed snare."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a simple lead melody over this progression, in the style of a fiddle line: singable phrases with grace notes sliding into the main notes, sitting above the guitar."
- "Keep the chords, but rewrite the guitar from strumming to a gentle fingerpicked pattern, and slow it to 80 BPM for a more intimate, stripped-back feel."
- "Extend this verse by 8 bars into a chorus: lift the melody higher, open the chords up, and double the strumming intensity for a bigger sing-along feel."

Ambient

Prompt for long durations, slow movement, and space to create simplicity and serenity.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Slowly evolving ambient pad progression in C Major, 60 BPM, with long overlapping chords that drift between voicings, serene and weightless, for Spectrasonics Omnisphere."
- "Sparse ambient piano melody in E Minor, 55 BPM. Soft single notes and small two-note intervals with long silences between phrases, melancholic and reflective."
- "16-bar cinematic ambient soundscape in D Minor, 70 BPM, 3/4 time. Evolving pads, a sparse piano motif that repeats with small variations, and subtle low string swells underneath."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a slow-moving bass drone under these pads: long sustained root notes that change only when the chords do, anchoring the piece without adding rhythm."
- "Keep the pads, but rewrite the piano motif in a higher octave with even fewer notes, so it feels like a distant memory of the original melody."
- "Extend this soundscape by 16 bars with a gradual arc: let the texture thin out almost to silence in the middle, then slowly rebuild with one new layer at a time."

Latin

Rhythm patterns are as important (clave, bossa) as naming the genre here.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Bossa nova guitar pattern in A Minor, 130 BPM, 4/4 time. Syncopated fingerstyle chords with the classic bossa rhythm, smooth and relaxed, for Ample Guitar Nylon."
- "Reggaeton drum beat at 95 BPM: steady kick, snare on the classic off-beat pattern, and crisp hats. Modern and club-ready, for Toontrack Latin Percussion EZX."
- "16-bar salsa-style groove in C Minor, 190 BPM. Montuno piano pattern with syncopated octaves, a tumbao bassline that anticipates the chord changes, and layered percussion following a 2-3 clave."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a melodic bassline under this bossa pattern: smooth and round, landing on the low root at the start of each bar and walking up into the next chord, for MODO Bass."
- "Keep the percussion, but rewrite the melody and chords with a minor-key Latin trap feel: darker, sparser, and half the tempo feel."
- "Extend this groove by 8 bars into a coro section: simplify the piano to rhythmic stabs and add a call-and-response melody on top."

Orchestral + Cinematic

Name the arc (building, swelling, collapsing) and the ensemble size, since a solo cello and a full orchestra tell very different stories.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Dark cinematic string section in E-flat Minor, 4/4 time, 110 BPM. Low sustained cellos and basses with a slow building tension, rising to tremolo strings in the final 2 bars, fit for a thriller trailer, for Spitfire BBC Symphony Orchestra."
- "Gentle solo piano theme in A Minor, 72 BPM. A simple, memorable melody with soft broken-chord accompaniment, melancholic and intimate, like the quiet moment before a film's climax."
- "16-bar heroic orchestral theme in C Major, 120 BPM. Bold brass melody, driving staccato strings underneath, and timpani accents on the downbeats, building to a triumphant final phrase."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a French horn counter-melody under this string theme: long noble phrases that move when the melody rests, sitting in the horn's warm middle register."
- "Keep the melody, but rewrite the arrangement from full orchestra down to a string quartet: intimate, exposed, and fragile."
- "Extend this theme by 8 bars into a collapse: the full orchestra thins out layer by layer until only a solo violin carries the melody."

Alternative + Indie

Prompt for texture (jangly, hazy) and lean on era references, since indie is defined by its scenes.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Jangly indie rock guitar riff in B Minor, 128 BPM, 4/4 time. Bright arpeggiated chords with an open airy voicing, bittersweet and nostalgic, inspired by 2000s indie."
- "Dreamy bedroom pop chord progression at 95 BPM in F Major, with hazy warm synth chords, a round simple bassline, and a lazy relaxed feel, for u-he Diva."
- "16-bar driving indie anthem verse in D Major, 138 BPM. Eighth-note bass pulse, shimmering guitar chords with space between hits, and an urgent drum beat with a four-on-the-floor kick under a rock backbeat."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a lead synth hook over this progression: short, catchy, slightly detuned phrases that repeat like a mantra, for Arturia Jun-6 V."
- "Keep the bass and drums, but rewrite the guitars as clean, palm-muted post-punk lines: angular, dry, and rhythmic instead of shimmering."
- "Extend this verse by 8 bars into a swelling pre-chorus: hold one chord longer than expected, let the drums open up, and push the melody upward into the chorus."

Video Game + Anime

Game and anime music lives on descriptive, memorable motifs. Name the setting or scene type (battle, town, end credits) and the console era if you want that retro feel.

Starting from Scratch (Prompt 1):

- "Uplifting chiptune melody and bass combo in C Major, 150 BPM, 4/4 time. Bright 50% square-wave lead with fast arpeggios and a bouncy triangle-wave bassline, reminiscent of 8-bit console adventure games, for Magical 8bit Plug."
- "Emotional anime-style piano theme in D Major, 80 BPM. A soaring, expressive melody with rich supporting chords, building from quiet to sweeping, like an opening-credits theme."
- "16-bar RPG battle theme in E Minor, 165 BPM. Driving orchestral strings and brass stabs, a fast heroic lead melody, and relentless percussion, urgent and adventurous."

Accompany, Rewrite, Extend (Prompt 2):

- "Add a counter-melody to this theme in a higher octave: quick playful phrases that echo the main melody's rhythm, like a second instrument answering the hero."
- "Keep the melody, but rewrite this as a peaceful town theme version: slow it down, soften the instruments to gentle plucks and pads, and simplify the rhythm."
- "Extend this theme by 8 bars into a final-boss variation: shift to the parallel minor, add dissonant low brass hits, and double the percussion intensity."