Rekenreks are a type of abacus that was designed by Adrian Treffers, a mathematics curriculum researcher at the Freudenthal Institute in Holland, to support the natural development of number sense in children.

This tool provides learners with the visual models they need to discover number relationships and develop a variety of addition and subtraction strategies, including doubles plus or minus one, making tens, and compensation.


Smaller versions consist of two rows of 10 beads. There are also larger versions with ten rows of ten beads. Each row is made of five red beads and five white beads Students can easily see groups of 5 and 10, and can move the beads to show their counting and thinking as they put numbers together and take them apart. Using 5 and 10 as anchors for counting, adding and subtracting is obviously more efficient than one-by-one counting.

$\leftarrow$ One row of 10
$\leftarrow 3$ more
Thirteen is seen as "10 and 3 more"

