

Used To

Form

[used to + V1]

I used to go to the beach every day.

I didn't use to go to the beach very often actually.

Did you really use to go to the beach every day?

USE 1 Habit in the Past



We use 'used to' to express the idea that something was an old habit that stopped in the past. It indicates that something was done often in the past, but it is not usually done now.

- Jerry used to study English.
- Sam and Mary used to go to Mexico in the summer.
- I used to start work at 9 o'clock.
- Christine used to eat meat, but now she is a vegetarian.

USE 2 Past Facts



We also use 'used to' to talk about things that were true in the past but which are no longer true.

- I used to live in Paris.
- Sarah used to be fat, but now she is thin.
- George used to be the best student in class, but now Lena is the best.
- Oranges used to cost very little in Florida, but now they are quite expensive.

Active/Passive

ACTIVE : My company used to pay me on the 30th of every month.

PASSIVE: I used to be paid on the 30th of every month.

Common Mistakes

1. To confuse 'used to' with 'to be used to'. The latter means to be accustomed to something (normally out of habit or experience) and is used with a noun or with a gerund, e.g.

- Now that I have been here for a few years I am used to living in Austria.
- She's OK, I am used to her now.

The most common error is to say 'I am used to live in Austria' instead of either 'I am used to living in Austria' or 'I used to live in Austria' which, as you now know, are two different sentences with two different meanings.

2. To miss off the 'd' when writing, e.g.

- I use to live in Spain.

This is because the 'd' is pronounced like a 't' and since the next word 'to' also begins with a 't' sound, it seems like there is only one 't'. When speaking, we frequently run words together, so it sounds like 'use-to'.

The equivalent of 'used to' in the present

People often ask if there is a present form of 'used to'. There is not. In the present we use adverbs of frequency and/time expressions along with the present simple tense to talk about what we do regularly, e.g.

- I usually get up at 7am.
- I go running every day.

and just the present simple tense to talk about facts.

- I live in Vienna.
- John is the best student in the class.

Adapted from:

<http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/usedto.html>

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<http://www.grammar.cl/rules/used-to-use-to.htm>