

Used to (do)

A

Study this example situation:

A few years ago

Today

past 2 years ago now

he used to jog

he doesn't jog now

David quit jogging two years ago. He doesn't jog anymore. But he used to jog. He used to jog three miles a day. He used to jog = he jogged regularly for some time in the past, but he doesn't jog now.

B

Something used to happen = something happened regularly in the past but no longer happens:

- I used to play tennis a lot, but I don't play as much now.
- Diane used to travel a lot. These days she doesn't take many trips.
- "Do you go to the movies very often?" "Not anymore, but I used to." (= I used to go)

We also use used to for something that was true but is not true anymore:

- This building is now a furniture store. It used to be a movie theater.
- I started drinking coffee recently. I never used to like it before.
- Nicole used to have very long hair when she was a child.

C

Used to do is past. There is no present form. You cannot say "I use to do." To talk about the present, use the present simple (I do). Compare:

past	he used to travel	we used to live	there used to be
present	he travels	we live	there is

- We used to live in a small town, but now we live in Chicago.
- There used to be four movie theaters in town. Now there is only one.

D

The normal question form is did (you) use to . . . ?:

- Did you use to eat a lot of candy when you were a child?

The negative form is didn't use to:

- I didn't use to like him.

E

Compare I used to do and I was doing (see Unit 6):

- I used to watch TV a lot. (= I watched TV regularly in the past, but I no longer do this)
- I was watching TV when the phone rang. (= I was in the middle of watching TV)

F

Do not confuse I used to do and I am used to doing (see Unit 58). The structures and meanings are different:

- I used to live alone. (= I lived alone in the past, but I no longer live alone)
- I am used to living alone. (= I live alone, and I don't find it strange or new because I've been living alone for some time)

Exercises

17.1 Complete these sentences with *use(d) to* + an appropriate verb.

- David quit jogging two years ago. He used to jog four miles a day.
- Jim _____ a motorcycle, but he sold it last year and bought a car.
- We moved to Spain a few years ago. We _____ in Paris.
- I rarely eat ice cream now, but I _____ it when I was a child.
- Tracy _____ my best friend, but we aren't friends anymore.
- It only takes me about 40 minutes to get to work since the new highway was opened. It _____ more than an hour.
- There _____ a hotel near the airport, but it closed a long time ago.
- When you lived in New York, _____ to the theater very often?

17.2 Matthew changed his lifestyle. He stopped doing some things and started doing other things:

He stopped { studying hard
going to bed early
running three miles every morning

He started { sleeping late
going out every night
spending a lot of money

Write sentences about Matthew with *used to* and *didn't use to*.

- He used to study hard.
- He didn't use to sleep late.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

17.3 Compare what Karen said five years ago and what she says today:

Five years ago	Today
I travel a lot.	My dog died two years ago.
I play the piano.	I eat lots of cheese now.
I'm very lazy.	I work very hard these days.
I don't like cheese.	I don't see many people these days.
I have a dog.	I haven't played the piano for years.
I'm a hotel receptionist.	I read a newspaper every day now.
I've got lots of friends.	I work in a bookstore now.
I never read newspapers.	I don't take many trips these days.
I don't drink tea.	Tea's great! I like it now.

Now write sentences about how Karen has changed. Use *used to* / *didn't use to* / *never used to* in the first part of your sentence.

- She used to travel a lot, but she doesn't take many trips these days.
- She used _____, but _____.
- _____, but _____.
- _____, but _____.
- _____, but _____.
- _____, but _____.
- _____, but _____.
- _____, but _____.
- _____, but _____.