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Verb patterns are one or two verbs followed by preposition. Some verb patterns may look similar but have very different meanings.

Consider the following examples:

- *I **used to drive** on the left when I lived in the UK.*
- *I **would drive** to my mother's house when I lived closer to her.*
- *When I came to the UK, I had to **get used to driving** on the left.*
- *I **am used to driving** on the left since I've lived in the UK for a long time.*

Used to + infinitive

We use 'used to + [infinitive](#)' to talk about things that *happened often in the past*, but no longer happen.

This pattern can also be used for things that were true in the past, but are not true anymore:

- *I **used to play** football a lot, but I don't play much now.*
- *Ben **used to drink** a lot of beer when he was student. These days he doesn't drink at all.*
- *This building **used to be** a shoe factory, but now it is a museum.*

Would + infinitive

We also use 'would' for things that *were true in the past*, but are not true anymore. It usually denotes *habitual actions* in the past but not past states:

- *When I was a child, I **would watch** TV every Saturday morning.*
- *Every weekend I **would go** on a long bike ride.*

Note: For many situations, both ‘used to’ and ‘would’ can be used. However, for past states, only ‘used to’ can be used.

- *We used to live in London when I was a child.*

‘Would’ is not used with [state verbs](#) (*have, be, live, love, smell, feel, know, etc.*).

- *She used to have a house in the country. NOT: ~~She would have a house in the country.~~*

Be used to + object

We use ‘be used to + object ([gerund/noun/pronoun](#))’ to talk about something that has been done *for a long time* and is normal and familiar.

- *Can I have some pepper, please? I’m **used to** more spicy **food**.* (be used to + noun)
- *Katrin **was used to** her **classmates**, so she missed them after moving to another town.*(be used to + noun)
- *Jack **is used to** **working** alone; he never asks for any help.* (be used to + gerund)
- *My dogs **are used to** **playing** with other pets when outdoors.* (be used to + gerund)

Get used to + object

We use ‘get used to + object (gerund/noun/pronoun)’ to describe situations when we learn something *new* or *adapt to new conditions*:

- *Tom **got used to** new weather conditions within a couple of days.*
- *It didn’t take much time for the students to **get used to** their new teacher.*
- *When I travel, I **get used to** sleeping in a plane quite easily.*
- *He **got used to** hearing the noise from the street.*

Watch this video from Oxford English Now and learn about the difference between ‘used to’, ‘would’, ‘get used to’ and ‘be used to’:

See also:

[Verb Patterns: Gerund vs Infinitive](#)