We use *used to* + verb for talking about states or actions that were true or happened in the past, but are not true or do not happen now.

**Can you give me some examples?**

Yes, of course.

*London’s nothing like it used to be!*

*She used to go away* on really long trips.

**OK. So now she doesn’t go away on really long trips?**

Exactly. *Used to* is always for talking about actions or states in the past that are not true now.

*The record shop I always used to visit* is now a really cool café. (I don’t visit the place now.)

**Why can’t you use the past simple?**

Well, you can, of course. But we use *used to* to emphasise that the state or action is not true now or does not happen now.

**What about the negative?**

We use *do* in the past + *not* + the infinitive, *use to* + verb. The question is formed in a similar way.

*He didn’t use to wear* nice clothes and recently he’s been looking quite cool.

*So what else did you use to go* to London for?
That’s quite a long construction – three verbs!

Yes, but *used to* doesn’t change – it’s always in the past simple.

Always in the past simple? So you can’t use it in the present?

No, it’s a strange verb. We only use it in the past.

I think I *used to use* it in the present too.

Oh dear. You won’t any more, will you?

No, I *didn’t use to know* the rules, but now I do.