Would vs Used (to)

WOULD – FORMER ROUTINE

Would and used (to) have very similar meanings and can often be used in the same situations. Would expresses that an activity was routine, typical behavior, frequently repeated.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	COMP / ADJUNCT
NP	MODAL V	PLAIN FORM VERB
We	would	go to the beach after school.
We	would	put on our swimsuits.
We	would	head for the waves.
The guys	would	smoke and act "cool".
(you) →	Would you	smoke too?

USED (TO) – FORMER HABIT

Use (to) (used in the past tense) expresses that an activity was a past habit; it occurred at an earlier stage of life but not now. It focuses on the habit, not duration or frequency.

SUBJECT	PREDICATE	COMP / ADJUNCT
NP	PAST-PART. V	INFIN CLS
We	used	to go to the beach after school.
We	used	to put on our swimsuits.
We	used	to head for the waves.
The guys	used	to smoke and act "cool".
(you) →	Did youuse[1]	to smoke?

Would vs Used (to)

Differences Between Would and Used

- Would expresses that an activity was frequently repeated; therefore, it cannot refer to past states, except when related to the occurrence of another activity (time-relative activity).
- Used can refer to past states: being, possession, mind, and major, unbreakable habits (usually bad), etc.

She would be the most popular girl on the beach. (was always)	She used to be the most popular girl on the beach.