

-(으)려던 참이다

I was just about to

Catches an intention at the moment of acting. 참 means the very point in time — and the phrase almost always answers something that has just happened.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Ends in a vowel	-려던 참이다	나가다 → 나가려던 참이다
Ends in a consonant	-으려던 참이다	먹다 → 먹으려던 참이다
Ends in ㄹ	-려던 참이다	만들다 → 만들려던 참이다
Present moment	-(으)려는 참이다	나가려는 참입니다
Common partners	마침, 그렇지 않아도	마침 전화하려던 참이었어요
Spacing	참 is a noun	나가려던 참이다

WHEN TO USE IT

Vowel stems take -려던 참이다, consonant stems -으려던 참이다, and a ㄹ stem adds nothing: 만들려던 참이다. 참 is a noun and takes a space.

The intention must be immediate — you were on the point of doing it, not planning it for next week: 마침 전화하려던 참이었어요.

It is nearly always a response, and 마침 or 그렇지 않아도 usually introduces it. Someone calls, and you say you were about to call them.

The variant -(으)려는 참이다 describes the present moment; -(으)려던 참이다 looks back at one just past. The past form is far more common.

IN USE

- 마침 전화하려던 참이었어요.
I was just about to ring you, as it happens.
- 그렇지 않아도 물어보려던 참입니다.
I was on the point of asking you that very thing.
- 막 나가려던 참에 손님이 오셨다.
A visitor arrived just as I was about to leave.
- 점심을 먹으려던 참이라 같이 가시죠.
I was just going to have lunch — come along.
- 직접 만들려던 참이었는데 잘됐네요.
I was about to make it myself, so this works out well.

6 자리에서 일어나려던 참에 이름이 불렸다.

My name was called just as I was getting up.

COMPARED WITH

-(-으)려고 하다

-(-으)려고 하다 states an intention at any distance; 참이다 pins it to this instant.

내일 가려고 해요. (I mean to go) / 지금 가려던 참이에요. (I was on my way out)

-기가 무섭게

Both concern near-simultaneity. 기가 무섭게 says the second thing followed instantly; 참이다 says the first had not quite started.

앉기가 무섭게 전화가 왔다. (right after sitting) / 앉으려던 참에 전화가 왔다. (just before sitting)

-(-으)ㄹ 뻔하다

뻔하다 is a near miss you are glad to have avoided; 참이다 is an intention interrupted by good timing.

넘어질 뻔했어요. (nearly fell) / 나가려던 참이었어요. (was just leaving)

WATCH OUT

X 다음 달에 여행 가려던 참이에요.

O 다음 달에 여행 가려고 해요.

참 means this very moment. A plan for next month takes -(-으)려고 하다.

X 직접 만들으려던 참이었어요.

O 직접 만들려던 참이었어요.

A stem ending in ㄹ takes -려던 directly, without the 으.

X 마침 전화하려던 참이었어요.

O 마침 전화하려던 참이었어요.

참 is a noun and takes a space after the modifier.