

https://www.reddit.com/r/Gymnastics/comments/13l636/help_teaching_gymnastics_to_56_year_olds/

General session

Warm-up (5 minutes)

- **Cardio:** Start with fun, dynamic movements to get the heart rate up and muscles warm.
 - Animal walks (bear crawls, crab walks, frog jumps)
 - Running around the gym with high knees and butt kicks
 - "Follow the leader" with a coach or parent leading the movements
- **Flexibility:** Gentle stretches to improve range of motion.
 - Straddle sits reaching forward
 - Pike sits reaching for toes
 - Butterfly stretches

Skill Development (15 minutes)

- **Forward rolls:** Practice on a mat or soft surface. Focus on proper technique (tucking chin, rolling in a straight line). Use visual aids like cones or lines to guide them.
- **Backward rolls:** Introduce with assistance if needed. Spotting by a coach is crucial for safety and proper form.
- **Handstands:** Start with basic handstand holds against a wall. Encourage shoulder and core engagement.
- **Cartwheels:** Break down the skill. Start with side stretches and leg swings. Progress to cartwheels with assistance.

Strength and Conditioning (5 minutes)

- **Plank:** Hold for a short time (5-10 seconds) to build core strength. Make it fun by challenging them to hold it as long as their favorite song.

- **Jumping:** Incorporate jumping exercises like jumping jacks or hopscotch to improve leg power.
- **Climbing:** Use a climbing rope or ladder to build upper body strength.

Cool-down (5 minutes)

- **Stretching:** Repeat some of the stretches from the warm-up, holding them slightly longer.
- **Relaxation:** End with a calming activity like deep breathing exercises or a quiet game.

Important Considerations:

- **Keep it fun!** Use games, music, and positive reinforcement to keep the children engaged and motivated.
- **Safety first:** Ensure a safe environment with proper supervision and mats.
- **Individualize:** Adjust the activities based on the child's skill level and attention span.
- **Variety:** Change up the activities each session to prevent boredom.
- **Positive reinforcement:** Praise effort and improvement to build confidence.

This is just a sample outline, and you can adjust it based on the available equipment and the specific needs of the child. Remember, the goal is to introduce basic gymnastics skills while fostering a love for movement and physical activity.

Skill Focus

Warm-up (5 minutes)

- **Dynamic Stretching:**
 - Arm circles: forwards and backwards
 - Leg swings: forwards, backwards and sideways
 - Torso twists: gentle twisting from side to side
 - Jumping jacks: to get the heart rate up

Skill Development (20 minutes)

- **Forward Rolls:**

- Review: Start with basic forward rolls on a mat, emphasizing tucking the chin and rolling in a straight line.
- Progression: Introduce rolling on an incline (wedge mat) to increase challenge and build momentum.
- Game: "Roll the ball" - roll a ball across the mat with their feet while in a tucked position.

- **Handstands:**

- Wall walks: Walk their feet up the wall to get comfortable with the inverted feeling.
- Freestanding holds: Practice holding a handstand with a coach spotting for a few seconds at a time.
- Kick-ups: Introduce the concept of kicking up to a handstand against the wall.

- **Jumping & Landing:**

- Two foot jumps: Practice jumping over low obstacles (lines, blocks) emphasizing proper landing technique (soft knees, feet together).
- Distance jumps: Mark distances with tape and encourage them to jump as far as they can.
- "Stick the landing": Focus on landing in a controlled manner with arms raised.

- **Balance Beam:**

- Walking: Start with basic walking forwards on a low beam, focusing on balance and coordination.
- Heel-toe walk: Increase the challenge by having them walk heel-to-toe.
- Sideways walking: Introduce sideways walking on the beam.

Cool-down (5 minutes)

- **Static Stretching:**

- Straddle sit and reach for toes
- Pike sit and reach for toes
- Butterfly stretch
- Child's pose

Important Considerations:

- Safety First: Ensure a safe environment with proper matting and supervision.
- Individual Needs: Adjust the activities and progressions based on the child's individual skill level and confidence.
- Fun Factor: Keep the atmosphere fun and encouraging! Use games, challenges, and positive reinforcement.

- **Breaks:** Offer short water breaks between activities to keep them hydrated and focused.
- **Spotting:** Provide adequate spotting and support for skills like handstands and kick-ups.

This outline prioritizes skill development by dedicating more time to practicing specific gymnastics skills. Remember to break down skills into smaller steps and provide plenty of positive feedback to encourage progress and build confidence.

Strength and conditioning focus

Warm-up (5 minutes)

- **Cardio:**
 - Animal walks (bear crawls, crab walks, inchworm crawls): These engage multiple muscle groups and are fun!
 - Jumping jacks: A classic for a reason - works the whole body.
 - Running with high knees and butt kicks: Gets the heart rate up and warms up leg muscles.

Strength and Conditioning Circuit (20 minutes)

Divide the 20 minutes into 4 stations, spending approximately 5 minutes at each. Rotate through the stations, keeping the kids moving and engaged.

- **Station 1: Core Strength**
 - Plank: Hold for 5-10 seconds, encourage proper form (straight back).
 - Hollow body hold: Lie on back, lift arms and legs slightly off the ground, hold for 5-10 seconds.
 - Superman: Lie on stomach, lift arms and legs off the ground, hold for 5-10 seconds.
 - "Dead bug": Lie on back, arms pointing up, alternate touching opposite hand to opposite knee.
- **Station 2: Upper Body Strength**
 - Climbing: Use a climbing rope or ladder.
 - Hanging: Hang from a bar for as long as possible.
 - Wheelbarrow walks: Partner up and have fun with wheelbarrow walks across the gym.

- Animal walks with a partner: Bear crawl races, crab walk races.
- **Station 3: Leg Power**
 - Jumping: Over lines, boxes, or small hurdles.
 - Hopscotch: Classic game that builds leg strength and coordination.
 - Squat jumps: Encourage proper squat form and explosive jumps.
 - Bear crawls up an incline: Increase the challenge by having them bear crawl up a wedge mat.
- **Station 4: Flexibility and Balance**
 - Stretching: Straddle sits, pike sits, butterfly stretch.
 - Balance beam: Walking forwards, backwards, and sideways on a low beam.
 - Single leg stances: Practice standing on one leg for a few seconds at a time.

Cool-down (5 minutes)

- **Stretching:** Repeat some of the stretches from the warm-up and stations, holding them for a bit longer.
- **Relaxation:** End with a calming activity like deep breathing or a quiet game.

Important Considerations:

- **Keep it Fun!** Use games, music, and positive reinforcement to keep the children motivated.
- **Safety First:** Ensure a safe environment with proper supervision and mats.
- **Individualize:** Adjust the activities based on the child's skill level and attention span.
- **Proper Form:** Focus on teaching proper form to avoid injuries and build a good foundation.
- **Hydration:** Encourage the children to drink water throughout the session.

This strength and conditioning focused outline provides a variety of activities to engage different muscle groups and build a strong foundation for gymnastics skills. Remember to prioritize fun and safety throughout the session.

Flexibility Focus

Warm-up (5 minutes)

- **Light Cardio:**
 - Jumping jacks: Get the blood flowing and muscles warm.

- Animal walks: Bear crawls, crab walks, inchworm crawls to engage various muscles.
- Skipping: A fun way to warm up the legs and improve coordination.

Flexibility Circuit (20 minutes)

Divide the 20 minutes into 4 stations, spending approximately 5 minutes at each. Rotate through the stations, focusing on different muscle groups.

- **Station 1: Legs & Hamstrings**

- Straddle sits: Sit with legs wide apart, reach forward towards toes, then to each side.
- Pike sits: Sit with legs together, reach forward towards toes.
- Hamstring stretch: Standing with legs straight, reach down towards toes.
- Partner hamstring stretch: Sit facing a partner with legs straight, push against each other's feet.

- **Station 2: Back & Shoulders**

- Cat-cow pose: Start on hands and knees, alternate between arching and rounding the back.
- Bridge pose: Lie on back, feet flat on floor, lift hips off the ground, pushing through feet and shoulders.
- Seal stretch: Lie on stomach, push up with arms, keeping hips on the ground.
- Shoulder stretch: Reach one arm across the body, gently pull with the other arm.

- **Station 3: Core & Hips**

- Butterfly stretch: Sit with soles of feet together, gently push knees towards the ground.
- Frog stretch: Start on hands and knees, then bring knees wider than shoulders, keeping feet together.
- Lizard pose: Start in a lunge position, then bring front knee towards the outside of the front foot.
- Pancake stretch: Sit with legs straight and wide apart, reach forward towards the ground.

- **Station 4: Dynamic Stretching & Balance**

- Leg swings: Holding onto a support, swing legs forward and backward, and side to side.
- Arm circles: Circle arms forward and backward.
- Standing on one leg: Practice balancing on each leg for a few seconds at a time.
- Toe touches: Standing with legs straight, reach down and touch toes, then reach up towards the sky.

Cool-down (5 minutes)

- **Relaxation:** End with a calming activity like deep breathing exercises or a quiet game like "sleeping lions."
- **Child's pose:** Kneel on the floor with big toes touching, sit back on heels, and fold forward, resting forehead on the mat.

Important Considerations:

- **Keep it Fun!** Use music, imagery (pretend to be animals or dancers), and positive reinforcement to keep the children engaged.
- **Safety First:** Ensure a safe environment with proper supervision and mats.
- **Individualize:** Adjust the activities based on the child's skill level and attention span.
- **Proper Form:** Focus on teaching proper form to avoid injuries and improve flexibility effectively.
- **Hydration:** Encourage the children to drink water throughout the session.
- **Never force a stretch:** Encourage the children to listen to their bodies and stop if they feel any pain.

This flexibility-focused outline provides a variety of stretches to improve range of motion in different muscle groups. Remember to prioritize fun and safety throughout the session, and encourage the children to explore their flexibility at their own pace.