Rookie mistakes:

* Not requesting enough data – either in terms of the columns, or the time-frame or some other slice that limits the number of records included.
* Wandering aimlessly in the data without some questions and/or working theories on what you’re looking for.
* Slicing apart your data into separate worksheets or tables. It’s okay to do this to some extent and under certain circumstances, but sometimes this kind of slicing makes more work for yourself (i.e. you have to run the same formulas, pivot tables or queries multiple times) or limits what you can do with the data because it’s all separated.
* When cleaning or standardizing data … making the changes over the existing data, rather than in new fields.

Best practices:

* Make a backup copy of your data first
* Keep a “trail” of your data analysis and cleaning
* Repeat your analysis, start to finish, at least one time to ensure you get the same results