Taking leads has many different varieties and ways to get to your end lead. It needs to be comfortable to you. However, there are some consistent rules of thumb for good lead-offs.

1. **Eyes on the Pitcher.** Always keep your eyes on the pitcher (or wherever the baseball is) when you are off of the bag. Even if you are just one foot off the bag, keep your eyes on the baseball.

2. **Don’t Cross Your Feet.** When stepping out to your desired length, don’t cross your feet. At any time the pitcher could try to pick you off and if you are crossing your legs when he is throwing over you are not in a very good position to get back to the bag.

3. **Strategy.** Some players like to take their leads and take one step closer to the pitcher, this gives off an optical illusion that you are closer to the bag than you really are.

Others like to take their leads and take one step away from the pitcher. This is so when they dive back into the bag, they will make contact with the back corner.

This makes the tag a little more difficult for the first baseman, but this angle makes it look like you are a little farther away from the bag than you really are.

4. **Consistency.** Your leads should be the same every time so you don’t tip off when you are about to steal. You should be able to get to the same lead every time without looking back at the bag to see how far you are away. Get your lead the same way every time.

5. **Distance.** Your ideal lead is somewhere between 9 and 12 feet away from the bag.