

How to remove calcium build-up on a marble gravestone?

Q. What product is successful to remove calcium build-up on our family marble gravestone?

A. The best products for removing calcium build-up on marble gravestones, headstones, monuments, and other exterior marble are cleaners specifically made for marble and other calcium-based stone. These are usually sold as “marble-safe” or “stone-safe” cleaners and are pH-neutral. A diluted, mildly alkaline stone cleaner may also be used, but not too often, and it should be rinsed thoroughly afterwards.

Do not use acidic or abrasive cleaners. Marble is high in calcium-carbonate, so anything acidic will actually chemically react with the stone and permanently damage it rather than help it. Marble is a soft stone, so abrasives may scratch the finish.

The goal is to loosen and lift mineral deposits instead of dissolving them with acid or scrubbing them away. The products we suggested may contain gentle chelating agents that latch onto calcium particles and allow the buildup to be rinsed and wiped away without etching the marble.

Here are some basic cleaning instructions. Use a soft nylon brush or a natural-bristle brush to clean the marble, especially in engraved letters where calcium tends to collect. Let the cleaner do the work rather than scrubbing hard. Rinse thoroughly with clean water and allow the stone to dry completely.

If the calcium deposits are heavy, crusty, or deeply embedded, or if the stone is old and fragile, there's a chance you could accidentally damage the gravestone. You may want to leave this project to a professional stone restoration contractor. To find a vetted PRO in your area, visit

www.surfacecarepros.com and click on **Find a PRO**.

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