Alabaster - $CaSO_4 \cdot 2H_2O$

Hardness: 2 (gypsum). Cleavage: not reported. Very soft; avoid all metal tools. Poor water solubility; clean normally with water. Derust with dilute oxalic acid or ammonium oxalate, but limit exposure time to prevent damage to polished surfaces. Sonicate with some NH_3 to remove grease and oils. Avoid acids, caustic alkalis, strong cleaning agents and heat. Soak in clean or water, *briefly* then rinse and dry. For obstinate stains - probably residues from handling - try acetone or alcohol (95–100% ethanol or 99% rubbing alcohol).

Varieties/related species: Gypsum (see separate listing), onyx marble, satin spar, selenite.

References

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